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MERCY AND JUDGMENT.

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MERCY AND JUDGMENT:

A FEW LAST WORDS ON CHRISTIAN ESCHATOLOGY WITH REFERENCE TO DR. PUSEY'S "WHAT IS OF FAITH?"

BY

F. W. FARRAR, D.D, F.R.S.,

CANON OF WESTMINSTER, RECTOR OF ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER, LATE FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, AND CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO THE QUEEN.

κατακαγχᾶται ἔλεος κρίσεως.
"Mercy boasteth over Judgment."
Ja. ii. 13.

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E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY
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TO

ALFRED TENNYSON, ESQ.,

POET LAUREATE,

&c., &c.,

WHO, AMONG HIS MANY HIGH SERVICES TO

ALL THAT IS PURE IN CONDUCT AND GREAT IN THOUGHT,

WILL ALSO BE REMEMBERED BY POSTERITY AS

THE POET OF "THE LARGER HOPE,"

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"I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.'
(*Olam vaed*, "for ever and beyond.") Ps. lii. 8.

"His mercy is everlasting." PSALMS *passim*.

"Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."
MICAH vii. 18, 19.

"Mercy is dear to God, and intercedes for the sinner, and breaks his chains, and dissipates the darkness, and quenches the fire of hell, and destroys the worm, and rescues from the gnashing of teeth. To her the gates of heaven are opened. She is the queen of virtues, and makes man like to God, for it is written, 'Be ye merciful, as your Father which is in heaven is merciful.' She has silver wings, like the dove, and feathers of gold, and soars aloft, and is clothed with the divine glory, and stands by the throne of God; when we are in danger of being condemned she rises up and pleads for us, and covers us with her defence, and folds us in her wings. God loves mercy more than sacrifice." ST. CHRYSOSTOM.

"Judicium cum misericordia copulatum est, at veritas judicii miseratione Dei temperetur." S. AMBROSE, *Beati Immaculati*, xx. 4.

"Justitia Dei et misericordia non sunt duae res, sed una res. Misericordia est erga miseros, bonitas erga quoslibet."
PETR. LOMBARD, *Sentent.* iv.; *Dist.* xlv. C. D.

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MERCY AND JUDGMENT.

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CHAPTER I.

PREFATORY AND PERSONAL.

"We know our place and our portion: to give a witness and to be condemned; to be ill-used and to succeed. Such is the law which God has annexed to the promulgation of the truth: its preachers suffer, but its cause prevails."—DR. NEWMAN, *Tracts for the Times*, iv. p. ix.

AGAIN and again it has been asserted or implied—even by those whose character and position should have made them more careful in their statements—that I deny the eternity of punishment.

Once more, and once for all, I desire to render such false witness inexcusable by saying on the very first page of this book that I have never denied, and do not now deny, the eternity of punishment. And, to avoid any possible mistake, I repeat once more, that though I understand the word eternity in a sense far higher than can be degraded into the vulgar meaning of endlessness, I have never even denied, and do not now deny, even the possible endlessness of punishment. In proof of which, I need only refer to the pages of my own book—*Eternal Hope*—standing as they do unaltered from the very first.

In the month of November, 1877, during my ordinary course of residence as a canon, I preached a sermon in Westminster Abbey on 1 Peter iv. 6,

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"For for this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead." At that time there had been some discussions both on the nature of Eternal Happiness, and on the question, "Is life worth living?" Accordingly on October 14 I had preached on "What Heaven is"; and on November 4 upon the value and preciousness of human life. But since I desire always and above all things to be truthful and honest, it was impossible for me to attempt the refutation of that cynical pessimism which treats human life as a curse and as a mistake, without entering into the awful question of future retribution. While in common with all Christians I believed that there would be a future punishment of unrepented sin, and even that it might continue without any revealed termination so long as impenitence continued, it appeared to me that, on that subject, many of the conceptions constantly kept alive by current teaching were derived only from mistaken interpretations of isolated texts, and were alien from the general tenor of divine revelation. I knew it to be the popular belief, sanctioned by ordinary sermons, that the vast majority of living men would pass from the sorrows, miseries, and failures of our mortal life into inconceivable, hopeless, and everlasting agonies. I gave some specimens of that teaching, and in order not to prejudge it, those specimens were chosen, not from the writings of the vulgar and the ignorant, but from the pages of great men whom I love and reverence—from Dante and Milton, and Jeremy Taylor and Henry Smith. I endeavoured to show, as far as could be shown in the narrow limits of a sermon addressed to a mixed multitude, that much which had been said on this subject was unscriptural and untenable. In that sermon, and in one delivered on November 18 upon the question, "Are there few that be saved?" it was my object to prove that the current belief went far beyond what was written, and tended to force upon

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men's minds a view of God's dealings with the human race which it was almost, if not utterly, impossible to reconcile with all that is revealed to us of His mercy and of His justice, and with the whole meaning of the Gospel of Salvation.

I venture to think that such subjects should not frequently be treated in the pulpit, because the field of undisputed and essential truth is so large as to supply the amplest materials for moral and spiritual edification, without forcing us to dwell upon controverted questions. I have always acted upon this conviction. During twenty-five years I have scarcely ever done more than refer to the speculative question as to the nature and duration of future punishment. In six volumes[1] of school, university, parochial, and cathedral sermons, the reader will scarcely find any allusion to the controversy. I have held it sufficient to dwell on the certain and awful truth that, both in this world and the next, God punishes sin; that without repentance sin cannot be forgiven; that without holiness no man shall see the Lord; that by the death of Christ and the gift of the Spirit the love of our Father in Heaven has provided us with the means of redemption and given us the grace which leads to sanctification. But there would be no chance of religious sincerity or of spiritual progress, if we were never to enter a protest against the tyranny of human error when it encroaches upon the domain of faith and teaches for doctrine the mistakes and traditions of men. The pulpit of a metropolitan cathedral has always been considered

[1] *The Fall of Man, and other Sermons;* 4th Thousand. *The Witness of History to Christ.* Hulsean Lectures for 1870; 7th Thousand. *The Silence and Voices of God.* University and other Sermons; 6th Thousand. *In the Days of Thy Youth.* Practical Sermons at Marlborough College, 1871-1876; 7th Thousand. *Saintly Workers.* Lent Addresses at St. Andrew's, Holborn, 1879; 4th Thousand. *Ephphatha; or The Amelioration of the World.* Westminster Abbey Sermons, 1880; 3rd Thousand.

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a legitimate place for the treatment of questions which are not so well suited for ordinary parochial teaching; nor do I see any reason why Westminster Abbey, with its large and mingled congregations, should not occasionally be used for purposes analogous to those which made the pulpit of St. Paul's Cross so powerful in the days of the Reformation. Those who during the last four years have heard my sermons in the Abbey know full well that, there as well as at St. Margaret's, in ninety-nine instances out of a hundred, my aim is entirely practical, and my subjects chosen from the wide realm of those truths respecting which all Christians are agreed. But I am not at all ashamed, nor do I in the least regret, that, when I was naturally led to deal with a question in which the popular theology goes far beyond the Catholic faith, I did not hesitate to express my strong conviction that the opinions traditionally accepted by the majority of those who have never seriously thought of them, are unwarranted and are dangerously wrong. To believe with awful reverence in Eternal Judgment is a very different thing from believing in the utter distortion and perversion of the language and metaphors of Scripture which ignorance and tradition, working hand in hand for centuries, have degraded into what a deeply religious modern poet has characterised as "obscene threats of a bodily hell."

It has been laid to my charge almost as if it were a grave fault that in those sermons I adopted a vehement tone. Is it a sin to feel strongly and to speak strongly? Are the Prophets and the Psalmists never vehement? Is St. Paul never vehement? Are St. Peter and St. James and St. John never vehement? As for "adopting a vehement tone," my reply is that I never "adopt" any tone at all, but speak as it is given me to speak, and only use such language as most spontaneously and naturally

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expresses the thoughts and feelings with which I write. "Every one," says Dr. Newman,[1] "preaches according to his frame of mind at the time of preaching"; and it is quite true that at the time when I preached those sermons my feelings had been stirred to their inmost depths. I am not in the least ashamed of the "excitement" at which party newspapers and reviews have sneered. I do not blush for the moral indignation which most of what has since been written on this subject shows to have been intensely needful. In the ordinary course of parochial work I had stood by deathbeds of men and women which had left on my mind an indelible impression. I had become aware that the minds of many of the living were hopelessly harassed and—I can use no other word—*devastated* by the horror with which they brooded over the fate of the dead. The happiness of their lives was shattered, the peace of their souls destroyed, not by the sense of earthly bereavement, but by the terrible belief that brother, or son, or wife, or husband had passed away into physical anguish and physical torment, endless, and beyond all utterance excruciating. Such thoughts did not trouble the careless or the brutal, who might be supposed to need them. They troubled only the tender-hearted and the sincere. They were the direct result of the religious teaching which they had received from their earliest years. To the irreligious poor the common presentment of "endless torment" was a mere stumbling-block: to the best of the religious it was a permanent misery. The irreligious are driven to disbelieve in any punishment, because they have heard the punishment with which they are threatened described in such a way as to be utterly unbelievable; the religious accept these coarse pictures, and are either hardened by them into lovelessness or crushed into despair. Pharisaism and Infidelity are the twin children of every

[1] *Apologia*, appendix, p. 15.

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form of theology which obscures the tenderness of revelation, and belies the love of God.

Now to me it seemed that the Gospel of the grace of God ought to have in it at least *some* message of consolation for more than that mere handful of the bereaved who can feel sure that those whom they love are saved; and not for these only, but for all whose imagination is strong enough to realise what words mean, whose candour is sufficient to make them face the real significance of what they profess to maintain. For, if the common language of preachers on these subjects be true, there seems to be no escape from the logical conclusion that those who are saved are few indeed. Popular teachers still continue to argue, with no semblance of anguish or of horror, that the majority of the millions of mankind whom we daily see are perishing; that they are not walking in those paths which alone lead to heaven; that, to all human appearance, they die as they lived; and that, if those who have lived sinful lives, and brought forth no fruits of amendment, and not even given any visible indication of repentance, cannot enter into heaven, then all but a fraction of mankind are doomed to hell. Now to the mass of ignorant Christians the words "to be doomed to hell" have no other meaning than to be doomed to agonies in which sinners will burn to endless ages in torments to which all the racks and wheels and flames of the Inquisition—as religious writers again and again have told us—are as nothing; doomed to torments which exceed beyond all conception the deadliest agony which the mortal body can endure on earth.

I have been sometimes gravely warned not to attempt to be wise "above what is written." It was precisely because I feel the wisdom of such advice that I wished to sweep away the cruel dogmas and ghastly fancies which, pretending to represent "what is written," horribly distort it,—add to it and take

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away from it, and entomb its pure words in inverted pyramids of fallible inference,—and by so doing furnish sad instances of being *unwise* above what is written. I obeyed the precept by pointing to the errors of that self-styled orthodoxy by which it has been so habitually and so grievously transgressed.

Already I observe among the better sort of those from whose previous writings no other conclusion than the popular one could logically have been drawn, an anxiety to back out of these conclusions; a tendency to explain them away; an effort to repudiate them. They are now trying to soften down all those parts of their dogma against which the heart and conscience of man cannot but indignantly revolt, because we should otherwise be driven to admit that the life which has come to men, without their seeking, is and must be to all but the chosen few, no blessing, but an awful, intolerable, and inextinguishable curse. In the following pages I shall prove, as I have proved before, that the errors which I repudiate *have*, to their fullest extent, been the teachings of a majority of preachers, and even of theologians. It was my express object to show that they were *not* the teachings of Scripture when rightly interpreted, and *not* the teachings of the Church as decided by the decrees of her four great Councils, and by the authentic creeds and formularies of her faith.

Before proceeding I should like to say one word on a very common charge which has been made against the opinions expressed in my *Eternal Hope*. It is that they were "inconsistent"; "that it was difficult to make out what I did exactly believe"; "that I adopted Universalist arguments while I repudiated Universalist conclusions." I reply that it was not my immediate aim to be constructive or positive; I desired to get rid of what I believed to be false, not to lay down fresh dogmas as to what I believed to be true. It is

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painful to me to have to repeat once more that the publication of my book was forced on me by short-hand reporters who published my sermons against my will; and that the sermons, though they expressed beliefs which I had held for years, were every-day sermons written in a few hours, not elaborate theological treatises prepared during long leisure. But further, I believe that in all arguments upon the details of this solemn subject it is very desirable that *no* systematic dogmas should be laid down. The Church herself has carefully abstained from laying down such dogmas; she has only sketched a few great limits, "*Quos ultra citraque nequit consistere rectum.*" I accept sincerely all that the Church of England has required us to believe concerning hell. What I repudiate is that which she has never required. And the reason why neither the Catholic Church, nor the English branch of it, has ever defined the precise beliefs which have been taught by hundreds of individual preachers, is because Scriptural teaching on this subject has left room for very wide diversities of opinion. If I gave their due weight to what are called "Universalist" arguments, it is because they ought to have their due weight side by side with the arguments which prevent most Christians from entirely adopting them. And we ought to distinguish between that which is permissible *as a hope* and that which is tenable *as a doctrine.* Is there any human being to whom it would not be an infamy to confess that he did not *wish* that it were true that all men might be ultimately saved, as it is God's will (1 Tim. ii. 4) that they should be saved? We are taught to pray:—"That it may please Thee to have mercy upon all men." We pray for this. Would it not cause us the deepest joy if we could be fully persuaded in our own minds that our prayer can be granted? Do we *wish* that any soul of man should suffer endless torments? If not, we are surely permitted to pay respectful

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attention to the arguments of those who think themselves entitled by Scripture to believe that which *we* too desire, but scarcely even dare to hope. Those arguments may offer some relief to us even when we cannot affirm their absolute validity. They may cast some gleam upon a horror of great darkness, even if they do not enable us to enjoy the boundless day. God has given us natures disposed to love. He has bidden us to forgive and love our enemies. He has told us that His name is Love. "I must believe," said a devout and learned writer nearly 200 years ago, "that Thy grace will sooner or later superabound where sin hath most abounded, till I can think a little Drop of Being, and but one remove from Nothing, can excel in goodness that Ocean of Goodness which hath neither shore, bottom, nor surface. Thou art Goodness itself in the abstract, in its first spring, in its supreme and universal form and spirit. We must believe Thee to be infinitely good; to be good without any measure or bound; to be good beyond all expression and conception of all creatures, or we must give over thinking of Thee at all. All the goodness which is anywhere to be found scattered among the creatures is sent forth from Thee, the fountain, the sea of all goodness. Into this sea of all goodness I deliver myself and all my fellow creatures. Thou art Love, and canst no more cease to be so than to be Thyself: take Thy own methods with us, and submit us to them. Well may we do so, in the assurance that the beginning, the way, and the end of them all is love."[1]—Is there anything wrong in such sentiments? Is it not well for the world that all which can be said in their favour should be fairly and kindly considered, even if they point to conclusions too bright and too vague to be formulated into our Articles of Faith?

[1] *The Restoration of All Things*, Jer. White, Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell, A.D. 1712.

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There were, however, in my little volume some expressions which, to my great surprise, caused ambiguity in the minds of readers. When those terms are explained in the sense in which alone I used them, it will become even more clear than it has already become to the minds of all candid theologians, that my views are in the strictest accordance with all that is required by the Catholic Church. I assert fearlessly that they were, and are, in far deeper accordance with "what is of faith," than the current errors which they were intended to repudiate, or the bitter assertions which have been urged in their supposed refutation.

I. The first of these expressions was the word "*eternal.*" By "eternal" I never meant "endless"; by "eternity" I never meant "endlessness." I do not exclude the connotation of endlessness from certain uses of the word, but those uses are the accidents of its meaning, not its essence. I use, and always shall use, the word "eternal" in the sense of the word *aionios*, and especially in St. John's sense of that word. By "*Eternal Hope*"—a title not of my own choosing—I meant "*hope as regards the world to come*" (just as in our form of the Nicene Creed, "eternal life" is "the life of the world to come").[1] I used this word in what I conceive to be its true and not its vulgar sense, which I thought that I

[1] This clause is not in the genuine Creed of Nicaea, in which "I believe in the Holy Ghost," is followed by an anathema. In the "Constantinopolitan" Creed, or Revised Creed of Jerusalem, first occurs καὶ ζωὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος: but in the Creed of Cappadocia now used by the Armenian Church, in the Revised Creed of Antioch, in the Creed of Mesopotamia now used by the Nestorian Churches, and in the Creed of Philadelphia as recited by Charisius at Ephesus, we have εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. Nothing then can be more clear than that "aeonian life," in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, was regarded as the equivalent of "the life of the age to come." Now this latter phrase is very far indeed from a necessary implication of endlessness, for ὁ μέλλων αἰών is the "olam habba" of the Jews, and this future Age is in Scripture expressly regarded as only one step towards a final consummation (1 Cor. xv. 24). "Aeon" says Theodoret (*Haer.* v. 6), is

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could do safely, because much of my book was devoted to establishing that true meaning. But I have evidently underrated the fatal force and fascination of words long used in inaccurate senses, "which, as a Tartar's bow, do shoot back upon the understanding of the wisest, and mightily entangle and pervert the judgment." In the following pages I ask the reader to observe that though the writers whom I quote often use the word "eternal" when they mean endless, the word never has that meaning with me.

II. On the other hand, I generally used the word "*hell*" in its popular, and not in its theological sense. In current religious phraseology nothing is more common than the phrase "to die and to go to hell." Strictly speaking, such language is in every case inaccurate, for "hell," in the sense of "endless torments," as apart from the retribution of the intermediate state, is a condition which, in its final stage, does not begin till the Resurrection and the Judgment Day. When, therefore, I spoke of "hell" not being endless for all who incur it, I meant to indicate the doctrine which has now once more been brought into far greater prominence by English Churchmen than it had been for many previous years, viz., that a soul may pass hence into a retribution and punishment, which is yet not an endless hell, but is that Intermediate State of purification which may be metaphorically included in the term "aeonian fire."

III. Lastly, by dying "*in a state of sin*" I meant dying without any *visible* repentance and amendment; in such a state of sin as—so far as human judgment is concerned—would render the soul unfit for heaven. Such being the case, I find, with deep

"*an interval indicative of time.*" On the light thrown upon the meaning of the phrase by the fact that St. Gregory of Nyssa was not unconcerned in its admission into the Creed (Nicephorus H. E. xii. 13) I shall touch later on (p. 261). See Dr. Hort's *Two Dissertations*, p. 106, 138–147.

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thankfulness, that between Dr. Pusey's views and my own there is not a single point of difference as regards any matters of faith;—that there was no material difference between my views and those of many of our most learned living bishops and theologians I had already been assured.

IV. Further than this, the reason for some apparent contradictions was explained in many passages of the book itself. It was due to what, for want of a better word, I must call the "antinomies" of Scripture. By antinomies I do not mean absolute contradictions, but—partly adopting the sense in which Kant used the word—I mean that semblance of contradiction which results from the law of reason, when, passing the limits of experience, we seek to know the absolute;—I mean, in fact, truths which (so far as Scripture is concerned) may be maintained by opposing arguments of almost equal validity. There are some passages of Scripture which, if understood in their literal meaning, seem to teach a final restitution of all things, a final triumph of absolute blessedness, a final immanence of God in all things.[1] There are others which, taken in their literal meaning, seem to point to the final annihilation of the wicked.[2] There are again others which hold out no definite hope of alleviation to the doom of the finally impenitent.[3] There are others again, which seem to point to some temporary punishment, some purifying discipline through which men must pass, but from which they may be saved.[4] It is in some form of

[1] Luke ix. 56; John i. 29; iii. 17; xii. 32; Acts iii. 21; Rom. iv. 13; v. 15, 18, 19; xi. 26, 32; 1 Cor. xv. 22-28, 55; 2 Cor. v. 19; Eph. i. 10; Phil. ii. 9, 10; Col. i. 20; 1 Tim. ii. 4; iv. 10; Tit. ii. 11; Heb. ii. 14; 1 John ii. 2; iii. 8; Mic. vii. 9; Is. xii. 1, &c.

[2] Matt. iii. 12; v. 30; x. 28; Luke xiii. 1—5; xx. 18, 35; Acts iii. 23; Rom. vi. 23; viii. 13; Heb. x. 26—31; Rev. xx. 14; xxi. 8, &c.

[3] Matt. xiii. 49, 50; xvi. 27; xxv. 46; Mark iii. 29; ix. 44—50; Rev. xiv. 10; xx. 10; xxi. 8.

[4] Matt. v. 26; Luke xii. 59; 1 Cor. iii. 13, 15.

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the last aspect of the subject that I see the most probable solution to our difficulties and perplexities. In the doctrine of the Intermediate State, and of such changes in the condition of the dead as are implied in the ancient practice of prayers for the dead; in that "probatory fire" of the day of judgment, which the Fathers almost unanimously deduced from 1 Cor. iii. 13; in the doctrine of Christ's descent into hell; in the doctrine of the "*pain of loss*" as containing the essence of future retribution; and in all these doctrines taken in connexion with those conclusions which we cannot but form from the infinitude of God's mercy and the universal efficacy of Christ's Atonement, I see the dawn of a "hope for the world to come," and the emancipation of the human heart from the terrible pressure of teachings which not a few of God's saints have found it all but impossible to reconcile with His name of Love.

But I have never pretended to have any ready-made rigid scholastic dogma on the subject. My object was to repudiate what I regarded as unscriptural, not to attempt the impossible task of formulating a dogma more definite than any which the Church has laid down as to what is true. It is doubtless because of those very antinomies which I have mentioned, which are perhaps inseparable from the nature of the subject, that the Church has left such large latitude to individual opinion.

"This alone," says Perrone, "is matter of faith, that there is a hell."[1] The Church of England has not even condemned Universalism; she rejected the forty-second Article, which was aimed against it; and she has no utterance in any of her formularies so distinct "as to require us to condemn as penal the expression of hope by a clergyman that even the ultimate pardon of the wicked, who are

[1] *De Deo Creatore*, iii. 6, § 3 (in Dr. Pusey's *What is of Faith*, p. 19).

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condemned in the day of judgment, may be consonant with the will of God."[1] Knowing, therefore, as I do, how many there are of the highest intellect—especially among the laity and among our most eminent literary and scientific men—who regard the popular teaching respecting "endless torments" as one of their most insuperable difficulties in the way of accepting the Christian faith, I still think it my duty to show that those torments have been described in a manner unauthorised by Scripture, and that their "endlessness" is not so distinctly revealed as not to admit of being regarded in an aspect less appalling to the heart and more reconcilable with all which our Lord has taught us of our Father in Heaven, than that in which it has been presented in popular teaching.

But while, in form, this book is a reply to Dr. Pusey, in reality my conclusions are almost identical with his, except on minor points of history and criticism. And though I may be met again by refutations, triumphant only in refuting what I have never said, I am not discouraged. The book will at least find *some* serious, candid, and high-minded readers. On these this mass of evidence will not be without weight. That which is true makes its way in time even into the minds of those who persuade themselves that they have rejected it. What is said of an

[1] Privy Council judgment, Wilson *v.* Fendall. As regards three or four expressions in the Prayer-book, such as "everlasting damnation" (an expression unknown to Scripture, in which no such word as "damnation" in its popular sense occurs), in the Litany, and "perish everlastingly" in the Athanasian hymn, and "eternal death" (an expression unknown to Scripture) in the Burial Service, I may observe that:—i. the possibility of that awful doom is denied by Universalists alone, and not by me; and ii. those phrases can, in any case, only mean what is meant by their Scripture equivalents; and (iii.) they do not exclude the sense of "extinction of being," which is, at any rate, the very antithesis to endless torments. There is not a single word on the subject of endless torments in all the Thirty-nine Articles, and the forty-second Article, which forbade Universalism, was struck out in 1562.

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individual matters nothing; but truth and justice ultimately prevail. "He that judgeth me is the Lord." To Him, humbly, yet with glad and perfect confidence, I trust the cause which I maintain. If what I have written be condemned on earth, I say with Pascal that what I here repudiate is condemned in heaven. *Ad tuum, Domine Jesu, tribunal appello.*

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CHAPTER II.

THE OPINIONS OF MANY FATHERS, SAINTS, AND DIVINES, IN ALL AGES, HAVE BEEN MORE HOPEFUL THAN THOSE OF THE CURRENT TEACHING.

Ἱπ. οὐ μέντοι εἰώθασιν ἄνθρωποι ὀνομάζειν οὕτως.
Σω. πότερον, ὦ Ἱππία, οἱ εἰδότες ἢ οἱ μὴ εἰδότες;
Ἱπ. οἱ πολλοί.
Σω. εἰσὶ δ' οὗτοι οἱ εἰδότες τἀληθές, οἱ πολλοί;
Ἱπ. οὐ δῆτα.—PLATO, *Hippias Major.*

"How often in the reading of our ecclesiastical journals and controversial writings are we reminded of the truth of the saying, '*qui pauca considerat, facile pronunciat.*' But even worse than those rash and hasty judgments is the passion which within the last few years has grown up for an organised system of religious suspicions. One is tempted to believe that amongst certain divines the old rule, 'quilibet praesumitur esse bonus, donec probetur esse malus,' is reversed in all cases where ecclesiastical orthodoxy is in dispute. . . . It would be far better for us if we could always remember that no theologian has a right to give out a mere theological opinion on the doctrine of a particular school as an article of the faith sanctioned by the Church. The great scholastic theologians maintained that it was no less heretical to declare that to be an article of faith which was not *de fide*, than to deny an article of faith altogether."—DÖLLINGER (Speech at the Munich Congress).

IN the preface to *Eternal Hope*,[1] I singled out four statements as forming part of the current pulpit teaching about "Hell" in this and in many previous ages; and I did not shrink from stating my belief that they were unauthorised accretions to the true doctrine; that they were unsupported by Scripture,

[1] *Eternal Hope*, p. xxxii.

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and repugnant to reason; that they were matters of individual opinion, not parts of the Catholic faith. Those four points, which I will here arrange in a different order, were as follows:—

1. That the fire of "Hell" is material, and that its agonies are physical agonies.
2. That the doom of "everlasting damnation" is incurred by the vast majority of mankind.
3. That this doom is passed irreversibly at death on all who die in a state of sin.
4. That the duration of these material torments is necessarily endless for all who incur them.

Every one of these four opinions has been enforced for centuries by many teachers as forming part of the Church's teaching, as though they were infallibly derived from the revelation of God in Scripture. It is true that in recent times there has arisen a habit—perhaps half unconscious—of veiling them over with misty phrases; of letting it be assumed that they are held, while euphemisms are used which serve to conceal their naked horror. This course has been taken even by those who still profess to hold these opinions. But the same style has been adopted by those who would gladly repudiate them;—partly out of the principle of "oeconomy," partly from the mental inertia which avoids meddling with current "orthodoxies," partly because men were afraid to express views which, however true and sacred, would yet be denounced by the ignorant as dangerous innovations. But it seemed to me (as I have said), that if these four propositions be indeed tenets of our faith, they ought to be incessantly obtruded by all who hold them; nay, more, that they ought to be depicted by all, if not as vividly, at least as unmistakably, as they have been portrayed by such teachers as Jonathan Edwards and Mr. Spurgeon. If any religious teacher can really think as Mr. Spurgeon (for instance) appears to think about the nature of "Hell," he is only

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acting the part of a true man in preaching of Hell as Mr. Spurgeon has preached of it. These views, I say again, should either be held or not held. "Ay and No too," as Shakspeare taught us, "was no good divinity." If they are held, it is disgraceful not to avow them. Half-heartedness in impressing doctrines so momentous must surely be a criminal unfaithfulness. But, on the other hand, I repeat that "if, as I believe, these current opinions about 'Hell' are *not* tenets of our faith, they cannot be too honestly or too distinctly repudiated."[1]

Dr. Pusey, fortunately, regarded that sentence as a challenge to Churchmen to express their present views on this subject, and he has replied to that challenge in his book, *What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment.* Although his book is an avowed answer to mine, I find myself so entirely in accordance with Dr. Pusey on every essential point—for the apparent differences between us arise, as I shall easily show, from the use of terms in different senses—that I read his Essay with unspeakable thankfulness. With the exception to which I shall immediately draw attention, Dr. Pusey has shown that the views which I repudiated are no parts of Catholic doctrine, but are, as I had said, unauthorised accretions to it; and that the general drift of what I had urged is not only tenable, not only permissible, but is in reality far nearer to the Catholic verity, far nearer to the views of the Primitive Church, than the opinions which have been repeated by the majority of post-reformation writers. To show that I am not exaggerating the amount of agreement which exists in all essential particulars between myself and the eminent theologian who answered my appeal, I may quote this sentence from one of the letters which I had the honour to receive from him: "It is a great relief to me," he says, "that you can

[1] *Eternal Hope*, Preface, p. xlviii.

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substitute the conception of a future purification [instead of a state of probation] for those who have not utterly extinguished the grace of God in their hearts. *This I think would put you in harmony with the whole of Christendom.*" Now I can have no sort of difficulty in accepting the view of a future "purification," instead of "future probation," because, so far as I can discover, I had scarcely even referred to the idea of probation at all, and certainly had laid no stress upon it. My sermons would never have been written had the views now authoritatively stated as those of the Church been the views which were generally taught. The differences between Dr. Pusey and myself are much smaller than those between him and the popular errors which I wrote to repudiate. Dr. Pusey has in no instance been guilty—he could not be guilty—of that misinterpretation—that *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* as to my views, which I find in the criticisms of many of my reviewers. "If I had had time," he says in the letter which I have already quoted, "I would have re-written my book, and would have said, *You seem to me to deny nothing which I believe.* You do not deny the eternal punishment of souls obstinately hard and finally impenitent. I believe in the eternal punishment of no other. Who they are God alone knows. I should have been glad to begin with what we believe in common, and so to say there is no need to theorise about a new trial." Now I have said already that "a new trial" is no essential part of my view; not directly or consciously a part of it at all. The phrases, "a new trial," and "fresh probation," are more definite than I feel entitled to employ. I can heartily accept Dr. Pusey's own words (p. 17), "How souls shall, in the long intermediate state, be prepared for the vision and justice of God, we can plainly know nothing, unless God reveal it." It is remarkable that in writing to Dr. Plumptre, Cardinal Newman—whose theological knowledge no

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one, I imagine, will venture to dispute—uses almost the same language. "It seems to me," he says, "that you do not deny eternal punishment; but you aim at withdrawing from so awful a doom vast multitudes who have popularly been considered to fall under it. *There is nothing, I think, in the view incompatible with the faith of Catholics.* What we cannot accept is . . . . that man's probation for his eternal destiny, as well as his purification, continue after this life."

Here, then, are the testimonies of two very eminent living theologians, one Roman, and one Anglican, that the views which I urged (which are substantially the same as those of my late honoured teacher, Professor Maurice, and my friend and former teacher, Dr. Plumptre), widely as they differ from the popular dogmatism, differ in no perceptible degree from those of the Universal Church. If the great Roman Catholic theologian Perrone be right in saying, "This alone is matter of faith, that there is a hell," that is a doctrine which I never denied: nay, I expressly stated my belief that there was a "hell" (*i.e.* a future retribution), and that I could not teach that all would ultimately be delivered from it. Those who were anathematising my views were anathematising a portion of the Catholic faith; those who were maintaining what I repudiated were maintaining human errors founded neither on Scripture nor on the Creeds, but on the loose sand of unauthorised inferences and perverted metaphors.

I can make this clear at once. Some part or other of all that I repudiated is practically repudiated, and all that I ever maintained is stated or implied, in almost every one of the following passages. Those who aimed their weapons at me must aim them also at every one of the ancient Saints and Fathers, and the modern divines, whom I shall proceed to quote, as expressing the truths which I have always maintained. The world and the Church may judge

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whether these great men are heretics in the opinions which I share with them, and which many, even of my former critics, are now anxious to adopt. Never in the history of any controversy have I witnessed so rapid a transition of popular thought through the three phases of "It is false and heretical;"[1] "It is very possibly true;" and "We have always thought so all along."[2]

Here, then, are some of the utterances of Christians of many schools, which I accept as conceding, in one direction or other, all that is essential—all that I care for, all that I wished to maintain—in that "aeonian hope" for which I pleaded.[3] They might be almost indefinitely multiplied, but I have referred to many similar passages in later chapters, and I have here purposely excluded the opinions of those who, like Origen in ancient times and Professor Maurice in our own, are universally known to have embraced "the larger hope." Other opinions, also leaning to milder views, will be found later on under various heads.

ST. CLEMENS OF ALEXANDRIA, † circ. 218.—"He saves all, but converting some by punishments, and others who follow by their own will .... that every knee may bend to Him, of things in heaven and earth and under the earth."[4]

[1] "You cannot but have oft observed how common a practice it is with those who either cannot dispute, or begin to be tired with it, to make short work with their adversaries by calling them heretics."—BISHOP RUST, *A Short Account of Origen* (*The Phenix*, vol. i. p. 61).

[2] What Perrone says of Purgatory expresses exactly what I have said of future punishment: "Omnia quae ad locum, tempus, poenarum naturam et acerbitatem spectant, dogma non attingunt."

[3] For the present I omit all reference to the views of the *earliest* Fathers, which are fully considered in pp. 234-248.

[4] "Non solum pro nostris peccatis Dominus propitiatio est, hoc est Fidelium, sed etiam pro toto mundo: proinde universos quidem salvat, sed alios per supplicia convertens, alios autem spontanea assequentes voluntate; et cum Honoris Dignitate, ut omne genu flectatur ei, Caelestium, Terrestrium, et Infernorum; hoc est angeli, homines, et animae quae ante Adventum ejus de hac vita migravere temporali."—*Fragm.* 1. *Joann.* (ed. Potter, p. 1009). See further, *infra*, pp. 243-247.

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EUSEBIUS OF GAUL, † 371.—Speaking of "those worthy of temporal punishment," and referring to Matthew v. 26, he says, "*In proportion to the matter of the sin will be the lingering in the passage.* In proportion to the growth of the fault will be the discipline of the discerning flame; in proportion to the things which iniquity in its folly hath wrought will be the severity of the wise punishment."—*De Epiph. Hom.* iii.

ST. AMBROSE, † 397.—"Those who come not to the first, but are reserved for the second resurrection, shall be burned till they fill up the times between the first and second resurrection; or if they should not have fulfilled them, shall remain longer in punishment." [1]

ST. AUGUSTINE, † 430.—"When the resurrection of the dead takes place, there will not be wanting some to whom, after the punishments which the spirits of the dead suffer, pity may grant that they be not sent into eternal fire." [2]

"Purge me in this life, and make me such that there may be no further need for the amending fire." [3]

ST. PAULINUS OF NOLA, † 431.—"That which the flame has not burnt, but proved, will be rewarded with a perpetual reward. He who hath done things which should be burned shall suffer loss, but *shall himself escape safe out of the fires.* Yet, wretched

[1] In Ps. i. 54. For the views of St. Ambrose, see *infra*, pp. 278 *fg.*; and see *De Bono Mortis*, p. 28; *De Fide Resurrect.* p. 33.

[2] "Sicut etiam facta resurrectione mortuorum, non deerunt quibus post poenas, quas patiuntur spiritus mortuorum, impertiatur misericordia, ut in ignem non mittantur aeternam."—*De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 22.

[3] "In hac vita purges me et talem me reddas cui jam emendatorio igne opus non sit."—In Ps. xxxvii.

On the views of St. Augustine, see *infra*, pp. 287 *fg.*; and compare, "The carnal who are to be saved by fire."—*De Civ. Dei*, xvi. 24. "In these judgments there will be some purifying judgments for some."—*c. Julian.* vi. 15.

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with the marks of his scathed body, he shall keep his life, not his glory."[1]

ST. METHODIUS, 3rd cent.—"The world shall be set on fire in order to purification and renewal. . . . *The Scriptures usually call 'destruction' the turning to the better at some future time.*"—*De Resurrect.* viii.

THEODORET, "THE BLESSED," † 458.—"For the Lord, who loves man, punishes *medicinally* that He may check the course of impiety."—*Hom. in Ezech.* vi. 6.

SIBYLLINE BOOKS.—"To them [the good] God shall grant to save mankind. . . . For gathering each from unwearied flame, removing them elsewhere, He shall send them, for His people's sake, to a life different and aeonian to immortals."—*Orac.* ii. 331.

ST. ISIDORE, † 633.—"When the Lord says, 'Neither in this world nor in the world to come,' He shows *that, for some, sins are there to be forgiven.*"[2]

JOHANNES SCOTUS ERIGENA, † 883.—"This, however, we say, not that nature will be happy in all, but that in all it will be set free from death and misery."[3]

THEOPHYLACT, † 1071.—"Jesus did not say, 'Fear Him who, after He hath killed, casteth into Gehenna,' but '*hath power to* cast into Gehenna.' For the sinners who die are not always cast into Gehenna;

[1] "Qui concremanda gesserit, damnum feret, sed ipse salvus evolabit ignibus."—*Paraphr. Ps.* i.

[2] *De Off. Eccl.* 18. "Demonstrat quibusdam illic dimittenda peccata."

[3] *De Divisione Naturae*, v. 3. As Origen was one of the greatest, if not the greatest, in natural genius of all the Fathers, so Johannes Scotus Erigena was one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of all the schoolmen. He was a man who towered above the heads of all his contemporaries. As the fifth book of his *De Divisione* is in reality a profound and subtle argument for the universal restoration of mankind, I would have given some extracts if space had permitted. He used language which *sounds like* the ordinary view, but completely explains away its significance, and says that only the *phantasiae* of evil will be eternal in individual consciences. (*De Div. Nat.* v. 31.) He calls it absurd to think that Christ only saved a fraction of mankind, v. 27.

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but it remains in the power of God also to pardon. He doth not, therefore, always, after He hath killed, cast into Gehenna, but hath power to cast."—*Theoph. in Luc.* xii. 5.

ST. ANSELM, † 1109.—"It is not just that God should altogether suffer to perish His creature which He hath made." [1]

"God demands from no sinner more than he owes; but since no one can pay as much as he owes, Christ alone paid for all more than the debt due." [2]

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, † 1274.—Referring to Ps. lxxvi. 8, which (like all the other passages which seem to open large hopes of God's mercy in the world to come) he explains away, he still says, "This is understood of pity making some relaxation, not of pity which entirely sets free, even if it be extended to the damned. Whence David does not say, 'He will restrain His pity *from*,' but '*in* anger,' because punishment will not be entirely taken away, but *even while punishment itself continues, mercy will work by diminishing it.*"—*Summa Theol. Suppl.* Pt. iii. Qu. xcix. Art. 3.

LUTHER, † 1546.—"God forbid that I should limit the time for acquiring faith to the present life. In the depths of the divine mercy there may be opportunity to win it in the future state."—*Letter to Hansen von Rechenberg*, 1523. (*Luther's Briefe*, ii. 454.)

COELIUS SECUNDUS CURIO, † 1569, Professor of Theology at Basle.—"Whatever God wishes, that is

[1] *Cur Deus Homo*, ii. 4. The chapter is so remarkable that I here append it almost entire. "ANS.—Ex his est facile cognoscere quoniam aut hoc de humana natura perficiet Deus quod incepit, *aut in vanum fecit tam sublimem naturam* ad tantum bonum. At si nihil pretiosius agnoscitur Deus fecisse quam rationalem creaturam ad gaudendum de se, *valde alienum est ab Eo ut ullam rationalem creaturam penitus perire sinat.* BOS.—Non potest aliter putare cor rationale."

[2] "Deus non exigit ab ullo peccatore plus quam debet." Compare the remark of Bishop Butler, that "Every one shall be equitably dealt with." "Every merciful allowance shall be made, and no more required of any one than might have been equitably expected of him." —*Analogy*, ii. 6.

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right and lawful to Him, and since He wishes to be called rich in goodness and mercy, it follows that He wishes to pour forth His goodness and pity on the most, and not upon a few. Otherwise, why does He wish to be called Father of Mercy and God of all consolation? and envious are all who wish so great a good to belong to a few only."—*De Amplitudine Beati Regni, libri duo quibus demonstratur numerum Salvandorum majorem multo futurum quam reproborum.* (At p. 25 he attributes the opinion of the fewness of the saved to the devil.)[1]

VALENTIN WEIGEL († 1588) an orthodox mystic, inclined to Curio's position.

SUAREZ, † 1617.—"Whether any one may be delivered from hell is a disputed point, and one which does not pertain to faith."—*De Peccatis*, Disp. vii. 3.

SIMON EPISCOPIUS, † 1643.—"Quomodo autem Deus poenam hanc sensus, sive dolorem hunc aeternum inflicturus est Ipsi relinquendum est. Sufficit enim si dicamus Deum justissimum et sapientissimum judicem neminem puniturum praeter aut supra modum. *In Assignando modo Aeternitatis fruatur suo quisque Judicio.*"

DENIS PETAU (PETAVIUS) † 1652.—"De hac damnatorum saltum hominum respiratione nihil adhuc certi decretum est ab ecclesiâ; ut propterea non temere tamquam absurda sit explodenda sanctissimorum Patrum hæc opinio, quamvis a communi sensu Catholicorum hoc tempore sit aliena."—*De Angelis*, iii. *ad fin.*

[1] Curio was an Italian Reformer. His book is written in a tone of sincere piety, but is not a treatise of much force. Although we are now told that the doctrine that the majority are lost is no doctrine which the Church requires, Curio was generally abused and persecuted for his book. A certain Bishop Vergerius, a man apparently of questionable antecedents, accused him to the senate of Basle for teaching that men might be saved without Christ. It was easy for him to prove that the charge was false. See his defence in Schelhorn's *Amoenitates Literariae*, xii. 592-627.

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BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR, † 1667.—"I observe that the primitive doctors were very willing to believe that the mercy of God would find out a period to the torment of accursed souls which should be nothing but eternal destruction, called by the Scripture 'the second death.'. . . Concerning this doctrine of theirs, so severe, and yet so moderated" (which he attributes to Justin Martyr and Irenaeus), "there is less to be objected than against the supposed fancy of Origen; for it is a strange consideration to suppose an eternal torment to those to whom it was never threatened, to those who never heard of Christ . . . . to people surprised in a single crime, to those that die young in their natural follies and foolish lusts, to them that in a sudden gaiety and excessive joy, to all alike; to all infinite and eternal, even to unwarned people; and that this should be inflicted by God, who infinitely loves His creatures, who died for them, who pardons easily, and pities readily, and excuses much, and delights in our being saved, and would not have us die. . . ."

"It is certain that God's mercies are infinite, and it is also certain that the matter of eternal torments cannot truly be understood; and when the schoolmen go about to reconcile the divine justice to that severity, and consider why God punishes eternally a temporal sin or a state of evil, they speak variously and uncertainly and unsatisfyingly."—*Sermon on Christ's Advent to Judgment.* (*Works,* iv. 43.)[1]

DR. HENRY MORE, 1688.—"The sovereign of these [divine attributes] was His goodness, the summity and flower, as I may so speak, of the Divinity: and that particularly whereby the souls of men became divine. . . . The measure of providence is the divine goodness, which has no bounds but itself, which is infinite. . . . As much as the light exceeds the shadows, so much do the regions of happiness

[1] On the views of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, see *infra,* p. 275.

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exceed those of sin and misery." . . . "But this is a marvel of marvels to me, that the goodness of God, being infinite, the effects thereof should be so narrow and finite as men commonly conceit; if there be no incapacity of the things themselves that thus straitens them. That one such share of the divine goodness should be active, but that the infinite remainder thereof, as I may so speak, silent and unactive, is a riddle, a miracle that does infinitely amaze me."—*Divine Dialogues*, pp. 479, 515.

RALPH CUDWORTH, † 1688.—After arguing that "no man can endure the pain of sense eternally," and that "material fire can prey only on the body," he adds, "For if you have recourse unto supernatural means, and miracles, to conserve it, then I see no reason why God may not as well change the course of nature, and work a miracle for man's salvation as well as for his destruction."—MSS. on Future Punishment (*Theological Review*, April, 1878).

BISHOP RUST, 1661, author of *De Veritate*, and successor of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, whose funeral sermon he preached:—

"Therefore we may be assured there are such reserves in God's most wise and gracious providence as will both vindicate His sovereign goodness and wisdom from all just disparagement, and take such course with and so dispose of all His creatures as they shall never be in such a condition which, all things considered, will be more eligible than never to have been.

"For certainly if He had cast His eyes to all possible conditions they [His creatures] might afterwards fall into, and seen this never-to-be-ended doom of intolerable pain and anguish of body and mind, the infinite compassionateness of His blessed nature would scarcely have given so cheerful an approbation to the works of His hands.

"I leave you to judge whether the whole subject-

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matter in this periodical doom, the nature of that fire and its fuel, the power of a spirit incorporate, be not such as to ensure that it will be shorter than some men do; who, having got easy ways of assuring themselves it shall not be their portion, do as little pity those calamitous souls whose lot it may be, as they darkly fancy God Himself does."—"Letter concerning the Opinions of Origen."—*The Phenix*, i. p. 828.

BISHOP BURNET, † 1699.—"Instead of stretching the severity of justice by an inference, we may rather venture to stretch the mercy of God, since that is the attribute which of all others is most magnificently spoken of in the Scriptures; so that we ought to think of it in the largest and most comprehensive manner." —*On Art. XVIII.*

SPENER, † 1705.—This learned and holy leader of the Pietists expressed a hope that there would be "better times" for the lost in the distant future.—*Schröckh*, viii. 292.

DR. WHITE, † 1712. Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, Preacher to the Council of State, Domestic Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell.[1]

"As sin and death were not brought in at first, so it is certain that they shall not be the end; for grace is the beginning of all, and the end must be grace also."—*Restitution of All Things*, p. 245.

SIR ISAAC NEWTON, † 1723.—"The degree *and the duration* of the torments of these degenerate and anti-Christian people should be no other than that which would be approved of by those angels who had

[1] This learned and pious divine was so disturbed by his inability to reconcile the ordinary teaching about endless torments with the goodness and love of God, that he fell into a dangerous and almost fatal sickness. "But in it, at the worst, he had a beam of divine grace darted upon his intellect with a sudden warm and lively impression, which gave him immediately a new set of thoughts concerning God and His works, and the way of His dealing with His offending creatures. . . . And upon this he presently recovered." The account was given by himself to his publisher, John Denis, who mentions it in the preface to the edition of 1779.

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ever laboured for their salvation, and that Lamb who had redeemed them with His most precious blood."—*On Rev.* xiv. 10, 11.

BISHOP BUTLER, † 1752.—"Virtue . . . . is militant here, but it may combat with greater advantage hereafter. . . . . There may be scenes in eternity lasting enough, and in every way adapted to afford it a sufficient sphere of action. . . . And . . . . suppose all this advantageous tendency of virtue to become effect amongst one or more orders of vicious creatures in any distant scene or period throughout the universal kingdom of God; this happy effect of virtue would have a tendency, by way of example, and possibly in other ways, *to amend those of them who are capable of amendment and being recovered to a just sense of virtue.*"—*Analogy*, i. 13.

"All shadow of injustice, and indeed all harsh appearances in the various economy of Providence, would be lost if we would keep in mind that every merciful allowance shall be made, and no more required of any one than what might have been equitably expected."—*Analogy*, ii. 6.

"Our whole nature leads us to ascribe all moral perfection to God, and to deny all imperfection of Him. . . . And from hence we conclude that virtue must be the happiness and vice the misery of every creature, *and that regularity and order and right cannot but prevail finally in a universe under His government.*"—*Analogy*, Introd.

MGR. DE PRESSY, Bishop of Boulogne, 1790 (an eminent theologian).—This passage (Matt. xxv. 46), and another in Scripture (Matt. viii. 12, "Non dixit Christus ibi erit fletus *perpetuus*"), "étant susceptible de plusieurs sens, il convient, ce semble, de les interpréter dans le sens le moins rigide, le plus favorable, le plus conformé à cet autre texte sacré *sentite de Domino in bonitate*, et à la principe du droit *odia restringenda ampliandi favores.*"

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ARCHBISHOP WAKE, † 1737.—"It may, with much more agreement to the text (Matt. xii. 32), follow *that all men, be their sins what they may, shall have grace of repentance whereby they may be pardoned in the world to come*, the blasphemer against the Holy Ghost alone excepted."—*Discourse of Purgatory*, p. 20. (He adds that the Jews certainly believed that, in the world to come, "some sins not elsewhere remissible might be forgiven.")

DR. ISAAC WATTS, † 1748.—"There is not one place of Scripture where the word 'death,' as it was first threatened in the law of innocency, necessarily signifies a certain miserable immortality of the soul either to Adam, the actual sinner, or to his posterity."—*The Ruin and Decay of Mankind, Question* xi.

J. A. EMERY, Superior of St. Sulpice (an eminent theologian), 1796.—"Peut-on trouver mauvais que nous rappelions des opinions innocentes qui vont à nous faire exalter la miséricorde de Dieu et à favoriser notre compassion pour ceux de nos frères qui ont eu le malheur de mourir dans la disgrâce de Dieu."—*Sur la Mitigation des Peines des Damnés.*

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON, † 1784.—"The generality of mankind are neither so obstinately wicked as to deserve everlasting punishment, nor so good as to merit being admitted into the society of the blessed spirits; and God is therefore graciously pleased to allow a middle state, where they may be purified by a certain degree of suffering." "Some of the texts of Scripture on these subjects are, as you observe, indeed strong, but they may admit of a mitigated interpretation."

MACKNIGHT, † 1800.—"Nevertheless, *whether an end is to be put to their misery, and at what period*, and in what manner it is to be ended, is not revealed, and rests with God alone to determine."

SCHLEIERMACHER, † 1834.—"Through the force

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of the Redemption a universal restoratio of souls will follow."—*Glaubenslehre*, § 163.

DR. CHALMERS, † 1847.—"There may be some mysterious conveyance, there necessarily must, as we believe, an egress be found for God's goodness to the sinner; but towards the sin there is nought in God but the most unsparing and implacable warfare."—*On Matt.* viii. 11.

PERRONE, 1835.—"All agree in saying that it is too violent to admit at once into heaven all those who only repented of their past evil life at the end, and who indulged too much in the sensualities of this life, since nothing defiled enters there; also it is too harsh to assign all such to eternal torments."—*De Deo Creatore*, p. 119, n. 7. (Comp. Dr. Newman, *Development*, p. 388.)

F. W. ROBERTSON, † 1853.—"He is gone. . . . Why should we have wished him to remain a little longer? Better surely as it is. And as to the eternal question . . . . we know of him all that we can ever know of any one removed beyond the veil which shelters the unseen from the pryings of curiosity—that he is in the hands of the wise and loving. Spirit has mingled with Spirit. A child more or less loving has gone home. Unloved by his Father? Believe it who may, that will not I."—*Memoirs.*

"In bodily awful intolerable torture we believe no longer. At the idea of a bodily hell we have learned to smile."—*Sermons*, i. 133.

DEAN ALFORD, † 1871.—"The inference every intelligent reader will draw from the fact [of Christ preaching to the once-disobedient dead]: it is not purgatory; it is not universal restitution; *but it is one which throws blessed light on one of the darkest enigmas of divine justice:* the cases where the final doom seems infinitely out of proportion to the act which has incurred it. And . . . . it would be presumption in us to limit the occurrence or the efficacy of this

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preaching. . . . Who shall say that the blessed act was confined to them?"—*On* 1 *Peter* iii. 19.

CANON KINGSLEY, † 1875.—"Can these dark dogmas be true of a Father who bids us be perfect as He is, in that He sends His sun to shine on the evil and the good, and His rain on the just and unjust? Or of a Son who so loved the world that He died to save the world,—and surely not in vain?

"These questions . . . educated men and women of all classes and denominations—orthodox, be it remembered, as well as unorthodox—are asking, and will ask more and more until they receive an answer. And if we of the clergy cannot give them an answer which accords with their conscience and reason, if we tell them that the words of Scripture and the integral doctrines of Christianity demand the same notions of moral retribution as were current in the days when men racked criminals, burned heretics alive, and believed that every Mussulman whom they slaughtered in a crusade went straight to endless torments,—then evil times will come both for the clergy and the Christian religion for many a year henceforth."—*Water of Life*, p. 71.

REV. DR. GUTHRIE, † 1873.—"My belief is that in the end there will be a vastly larger number saved than we have any conception of. What sort of earthly government would that be where more than half the subjects were in prison? I cannot believe that the government of God will be like that."—*Life*, p. 773.

DEAN MILMAN, † 1868.—"To the eternity (endlessness) of hell torments there is and ever must be—notwithstanding the peremptory decree of dogmatic theology, and the reverential dread in many minds of tampering with what seems to be the language of the New Testament—a tacit repugnance."—*History of Latin Christianity*, vi. 253.

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To these testimonies of good men and great theologians—most of them of unquestioned orthodoxy—of many ages down to the present day, I add the testimonies of a few out of very many eminent living divines who have spoken on these subjects in accents very different from those of the popular theology.

DR. PUSEY.—"But their minds may be more disposed to believe in a preparation of souls by which . . . . they may cast off their slough and, amid whatever process of purifying it may please God to employ, and after whatever time, be admitted to the Beatific Vision of the All Holy God."—*What is of Faith, &c.* p. 121.

REV. DR. LITTLEDALE.—"The answer which the popular theology has been tendering for centuries past will not be accepted much longer. . . . I disclaim any desire to uphold that theology, which I have never aided in propagating. . . . The popular theology is a very ineffective deterrent from sin. . . . The Scriptures of the New Testament contain two parallel and often seemingly contradictory sets of statements as to the last things . . . . one of which does make for the popular theology, and another which more than implies a full restoration and the final victory of good over evil. . . . An attempt was made to procure a formal condemnation of Origen's doctrines on this head . . . . but the effort failed, and the question remains an open one to this day. . . . There is great significance in the fact that in the simplest of our symbols, the Apostles' Creed, and in the most universal of them, the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan, we are called on to express our belief in the life, but not in the death, to come.[1] . . . This view [that of

[1] "And although the Athanasian hymn may obviously be cited adversely, it is to be noticed that it restricts itself in its closing verses to the citation of the exact words of Scripture, and does not undertake to gloss them for us."—*Id.*

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'endless torments'] puts God on a moral level with the devisers of the most savagely malignant revenge known to history—the deed known in Italy as *la gran vendetta.* . . . The horror with which we read of such a crime ought to make us all careful lest we should give our assent to the teaching which predicates it, only on an infinitely vaster scale, of the just and merciful God."—*Contemporary Review*, 1878.

REV. H. B. WILSON.—"The mode, extent, and duration of future punishments were open questions in the primitive Church, and the words 'everlasting fire' [i.e. aionion pûr] and similar expressions were employed by persons who formed very different and even opposite conceptions as to the nature of it."—*Speech*, p. 104.

CARDINAL NEWMAN.—"It seems to me that you do not deny eternal punishment, but you aim at withdrawing from so awful a doom vast multitudes who have popularly been considered to fall under it, and to substitute for it in their case a purgatorial punishment extending (as in the case of the antediluvians) through long ages; at the same time avoiding the word 'purgatory,' because of its associations. *There is nothing, I think, in this view incompatible with the faith of Catholics.*"—Letter to Dr. Plumptre, July 26, 1871, *Contemporary Review.*

BISHOP MARTENSEN OF SEELAND, 1870.—"As no soul leaves this present existence in a fully complete and prepared state, we must suppose that there is an Intermediate State, a realm of progressive development, in which souls are prepared and matured for the last judgment. . . . The intermediate state, in a purely spiritual sense, must be a purgatory determined for the purifying of the soul."—*Christliche Dogmatik*, § 276, on *Der Mittelzustand in Todtenreich.*

REV. J. LLEWELLYN DAVIES.—"Whether there is such a thing as an ultimate extremity of 'eternal death,' who shall say? What we are now concerned

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with is this, that the dissolution of the body is nowhere spoken of as the beginning or as the fixing of this state. It belongs to this life, in which escape and forgiveness are possible, as well as to the next."—*Forgiveness after Death*, p. 6.

BISHOP FORBES OF BRECHIN, 1868.—"The deep instincts of humanity, combined of pity and of justice, *demand a belief in some punishment, but deprecate eternal punishment in the case of many who go out of this world;* there such teaching as has been cited from the Early Church comes in to our aid. Nay, not such as these poor outcasts only, whom men have most in their eyes and their minds, because their sins are more tangible and coarse, but—and even yet more than these—rich and educated men and women who have more light than they, yet who, to outward appearance, live mere natural lives, immersed in worldliness, yet not altogether, it is hoped, separated from God, are, as they are, seemingly ripe neither for heaven nor for hell."—*On the Articles*, ii. 343.

"The true doctrine of which the opinion condensed in Article XIII. is an exaggeration and excess, is founded on the tenderest and deepest sympathies of our common human nature. Mankind will not endure the thought that, at the moment of death, all concern for those loved ones who are riven from us by death comes to an end. Nay, we go so far as to say that . . . . though death puts an end to each man's probation, so far as he is concerned, yet *the Infinite Love preserves the soul beyond the grave, and there has dealings with it.*"—*On the Articles*, ii. 311.

BISHOP MOORHOUSE OF MELBOURNE.—"The 41st and 42nd Articles (against Millenarians and Universalism) were withdrawn because the Church, knowing that men like Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian were Millenarians, and men like Origen, Clemens of Alexandria, and Gregory of

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Nyssa were Universalists, refused to dogmatise on such questions. From these facts it appears to me that we are entitled to draw three important conclusions: First, we are at liberty to think and teach about the future of the wicked as we believe that Holy Scripture teaches us. Secondly, varying interpretations are not only allowable, but inevitable, upon mere matters of opinion. Thirdly, *if perchance we hold 'the larger hope,' as I will not conceal from you that for twenty years and more I have done*, we shall yet be ready to acknowledge the obscurity which surrounds it, and the right of any of our brethren to think and teach differently from ourselves."—*Speech before Church Assembly*, September 17, 1878.

DEAN CHURCH.—"I should be disloyal to Him whom I believe in as the Lord of Truth if I doubted that honest seeking should at last find Him. Even if it do not find Him here, man's destiny stops not at the grave, and many, we may be sure, will know Him there who did not know Him here."

DEAN STANLEY.—"To Gregory of Nyssa, and through him to the Council of Constantinople, the clause which speaks of 'the life of the world to come' must have included the hope that the Divine justice and mercy are not controlled by the power of evil, that sin is not eternal, and that in that 'world to come' punishment will be corrective and not final, and will be ordered by a Love and Justice, the height and depth of which it is beyond the narrow thoughts of man to conceive."—*Christian Institutions*, p. 335.

REV. PROFESSOR CHALLIS, M.A., F.R.S.[1]—"May it not hence (from the phrase *aionia kolasis*) be argued that, as among men the punishment of the guilty has not for its purpose the infliction of pain and penalty, but rather is the means employed to the end that laws may be obeyed, so the end of divine

[1] Plumian Professor of Astronomy, Cambridge.

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punishment is for correction, and for giving effect to and establishing the law of universal righteousness?" —*Scriptural Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 71.

REV. PROFESSOR PLUMPTRE, D.D.—"Does this imply that repentance, and therefore pardon, may come in the state that follows death? We know not, and ask questions that we cannot answer; but the words at least check the harsh dogmatic answer in the negative. If one sin only is excluded from forgiveness in that coming age—the darkness behind the veil is lit up with at least a gleam of hope."—On Matt. xii. 32 (in Bishop Ellicott's *Commentary*).

ARCHDEACON REICHEL, D.D.—"With this assurance [that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world], and with the hope that it holds out in prospect; with this converging testimony of three of the apostles, men so different, and yet all coinciding on this point, let us console ourselves . . . . looking forward to that final stage in the divine government when death itself shall be abolished . . . . and when, *God being All in All*, the whole creation shall rest on the never-ending fruition of the divine."—*Sermon in St. Patrick's*, June 28, 1877.

GUILLAUME MONOD.—"L'entendez-vous, chrétiens? Le Juge du monde est l'Agneau qui porte le péché du monde; sa colère c'est la colère de l'Agneau. Que nous faut-il de plus? O mon âme, sois tranquille et attends en paix le jour des vengeances éternelles. C'est le jour de Christ, et ce sont les vengeances de Christ. C'est donc un jour de salut, et ce sont des vengeances d'amour. Juge du monde parais et frappe tes ennemis; ils tomberont à tes pieds, anéantis, anéantis par l'amour; et à leur place il ne se trouvera plus que des chrétiens pleurant sur leurs crîmes et sur tes douleurs, et répétant avec tout l'univers: Dieu est amour."—*Le Jugement dernier*, p. 28.

REV. PROFESSOR J. B. MAYOR.—"It is impossible for one who has learnt that the end of punishment,

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when it passes beyond the elementary stage of self-preservation, is not revenge, but reformation, to believe that divine punishment can be conducted on lower principles than men have attained to; it is impossible for one who has learnt that goodness cannot be happy in presence of the vice and misery of others, except in so far as it may hope to convert the vicious and to comfort the miserable; it is impossible for such a one to believe in the happiness of heaven co-existing with the sin and misery of hell."—*Contemporary Review*, vol. xxxii. 1878.

"CHURCH AND WORLD," i. 246 (a book presented by Bishop Wilberforce to Convocation in 1866).—"The Church has never in any way indicated for how many, or for how few, eternal punishment may be reserved; and the doctrine of purgatory, or rather any doctrine of purgatory, covers an indefinite portion of the ground on which the subject can be discussed. It was first brought before me by the death of a school girl about twelve years old. . . . There was nothing about her indicating any devotion of the soul to God, yet the notion that she was gone to endless torment was utterly inadmissible. . . . Reunited Christendom will one day, no doubt, define the doctrine more categorically, and probably the legitimate development of the truth contained in Our Lord's descent into hell will furnish a solution to all difficulties."

A. J. BERESFORD-HOPE, M.A., M.P.—"All reason, all experience, all Scripture, unite in the teaching that the Divine work of teaching goes on behind as well as before the veil."—*Contemporary Review*, vol. xxxii. 1878.

REV. T. GRIFFITH, Prebendary of St. Paul's.—After quoting Is. xxv. 6, lxv. 17-25, Hos. xiii. 14, Rom. viii. 26, 1 Cor. xv. 25, 53, Eph. i. 9, Col. i. 20, he adds, "All things are perfect in their type. But they shall be carried on at last into perfect harmony

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with their original idea. The evil, therefore, which now marks them is subordinate to their ultimate perfectionments. And then cometh the end; when the Son shall have subdued all things to the Father; when He shall have put down all opposing rule and authority and power; when He shall have negatived the negatives, and reconciled the antagonism through which things travel onwards to their ultimate affirmation and harmony; when the whole scheme of the Father for all His creatures shall reach its consummation, and God Himself be all in all."—*Fundamentals*, p. 212.

These passages, I say, represent all for which I have pleaded, and sometimes even more. They are taken from very different writers, and from writers who, even on this subject, probably differed very widely from each other. This only renders them more valuable as showing the great common basis of Eternal Hope —that is of Hope for a future World—by which they were all at least so far animated that the utterance of their hearts at their best and loftiest moments in some instances even led them to say more than they would have always ventured to formulate in their systematic creeds. I quote their authority, not as proving the truth of the views which they have expressed, but only as proving that those views may be held, and in all ages have been held, not only *in abditis fidei* but openly, by great teachers and faithful Christians. I do not think that one of the passages which I have quoted accords with the crude tenets of the popular theology.

I might even produce an array of very great and eminent authorities—Saints and Fathers and Bishops and Archbishops and eminent Divines—who have gone very much farther than I have done, and have pleaded for far more definite results,—some of them indicating

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the ultimate extinction of the wicked, some implying a belief in the ultimate deliverance of all.

Again I repeat I am not a Universalist. If I could see in Scripture, or in any source of divine teaching, grounds sufficiently decisive to authorise my conscience to embrace that blessed hope *for all*, I would embrace it with all my heart, and with unspeakable gratitude. Any man who would not do so—any man who would *wish* that any should perish, were it possible to save them—must have a mind utterly alien from that of Him whose mercy endureth for ever—whose tender mercies are over all His works—who loveth not the death of a sinner—who willeth all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth—who while we were yet sinners sent His Son to die for us. Yet however intensely a good and holy man would grasp at such a hope—however fiend-like must be the nature of that theologian who would not so grasp it, could he see it to be permissible[1]—yet, while I reverently cherish every word and sentence of Scripture which seems to open to all some distant gleam of possible deliverance;—while I cling to the hope that the restitution of all things, and the aeon wherein, as Scripture tells us, God shall be "all things in all," may have a wider meaning than men have thought,—yet, out of reverence for those other words of Scripture which seem to throw uncertainty on such an expectation; and also out of perplexity respecting the present existence of misery and evil; and further out of inability to judge of the possible power of resistance in man's free will; and lastly out of willingness to respect the preponderant opinion of Christian divines,—I have never been able to say, even in my most secret thoughts, that I believe that every single

[1] "He is not a Christian, he is not a man, he hath put off the tenderness and bowels of a man, he hath lost humanity itself, he hath not so much charity as Dives expressed in hell, that cannot readily cry out, 'This is good news if it be true.'"—JER. WHITE, *Restoration of All Things*, p. 9.

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soul of man will ultimately be saved. The Church has never in any Catholic Creed categorically *condemned* that view; nor has she ever excluded from her pale those who have held it or leaned to it; nor (as I shall try to prove) has she ever repudiated it in any oecumenical decree. Far be it from me, then, to echo the fierce invectives of those who, unlike St. Augustine, have raved rather than written against these "our party of pity." I cannot embrace the hopes of the Universalists; but I am not called upon to utter a fervid Amen if others like to hurl against them either the Damnamus of Augsburg or the Anathema of Trent. For consider these utterances—few out of many which I might adduce—of men who held the positions of pillars of the Church, and who in all ages have asked, uncondemned, for mitigations far larger than those for which I have asked of the "terrible decree" of popular Calvinism, or of its partial survival in the current teaching.

ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA, † 395. — Among other passages to the same effect, he speaks of Christ by His Incarnation "freeing both mankind from their wickedness, and healing the very inventor of wickedness," *i.e.* the devil.[1]

"For it is necessary that at some time the evil should be removed utterly and entirely from the realm of being. . . . For since by its very nature evil cannot exist apart from free choice, when all free choice becomes in the power of God, *shall not evil advance to utter abolition, so that no receptacle for it at all be left?*"—*Dial. de Anim. et Resurrect.*[2]

[1] *Orat. Catechet.* 26. τόν τε ἄνθρωπον τῆς κακίας ἐλευθερῶν καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν τῆς κακίας εὑρετὴν ἰώμενος.—For further remarks on his teaching, see *infra*, pp. 255-262.

[2] χρὴ γὰρ πάντη καὶ πάντως ἐξαιρεθῆναί ποτε τὸ κακὸν ἐκ τοῦ ὄντος. . . . ἐπείδη γὰρ ἔξω τῆς προαιρέσεως ἡ κακία εἶναι φύσιν οὐκ ἔχει, ὅταν πᾶσα προαίρεσις ἐν τῷ Θεῷ γένηται εἰς παντελῆ ἀφανισμὸν ἡ κακία μὴ χωρήσει τῷ μηδὲν αὐτῆς ἀπολειφθῆναι δοχεῖον;—*De Anim. et Resurrect.* (*Opp.* ii. 661.)

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"Since, however, it is necessary that the stains which have been implanted into the soul from sin, should be taken away by some process of healing, therefore in the present life the medicine of virtue is applied to it for the healing of such wounds; but if it remains unhealed, *the healing is reserved in the life beyond.*"—*Orat. Catech.*[1]

ST. GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, † 389.—"Perhaps there they [who go their own way, not Christ's] shall be baptised with fire, the last baptism, and more laborious, and more enduring, which devoureth what is coarse like hay, and consumeth the lightness of all evil."—*Orat.* xxxix. 1.[2]

"I know also of a fire, not cleansing, but also punishing; whether that fire of Sodom which God raineth on all sinners, or that which was reserved for the devil and his angels, or that which goeth before the face of the Lord, and which burns up His enemies, and that which is more formidable than these, which is joined with the sleepless tortures, which is not quenched, but is unending throughout eternity with the wicked. For all these belong to destructive power, *unless any one wishes to understand them too in a milder way, and worthily of Him who punisheth.*"—*Orat.* xl.[3]

[1] *ἐπειδὴ χρεία τοῦ κἀκείνης τὰς ἐμφυείας ἐξ ἁμαρτιῶν κηλίδας διά τινος ἰατρείας ἐξαιρεθῆναι τούτου ἕνεκεν ἐν μὲν τῇ παρούσῃ ζωῇ τὸ τῆς ἀρετῆς φάρμακον εἰς θεραπείαν τῶν τοιουτῶν προσετέθη τραυμάτων, εἰ δὲ ἀθεράπευτος μένει ἐν τῷ μετὰ ταῦτα βίῳ ταμιεύεται ἡ θεραπεία.—Or. Catechet.* 8. (*Opp.* ii. 493.)

[2] Dr. Pusey says that the allusion to 1 Cor. iii. 13, and so to temporary punishment, is manifest; but Chrysostom, Jerome, Photius, Theophylact, &c., understood the passage of the fires of hell.—See Petav. *l. c.*

[3] *Οἶδα καὶ πῦρ οὐ καθαρτήριον ἀλλὰ κολαστήριον εἴτε καὶ Σοδομιτικόν κ.τ.λ. πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα ἀφανιστικῆς ἐστι δυνάμεως εἰ μή τῳ φίλον κἀνταῦθα νοεῖν τοῦτο φιλανθρωπότερον καὶ τοῦ κολάζοντος ἐπαξίως.* Both the Benedictine editors and Dr. Pusey (p. 212), try to explain away the obvious expression of a possible hope involved in these last words; but Petavius frankly says (iii. 7, 14) that "it is manifest that in this place St. Gregory is speaking of the punishments of the damned, and doubted

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"VERY MANY" (NONNULLI IMMO QUAMPLURIMI). —St. Augustine, while meeting them with arguments singularly inconclusive, admits that "*some, nay, very many*, with human feelings compassionate the eternal punishment of the damned, and their continual torments without intermission, and so believe not that it will take place—not indeed in the way of opposing themselves to the divine Scriptures, but by softening, according to their own feelings, all the hard sayings, and by turning into a more gentle meaning such things in them as they think to be said rather to excite terror than as though true. For 'God forgetteth not, they say, to be gracious, neither will He in His anger shut up His tender mercies.'" [After trying to explain away the force of this text, St. Augustine adds] "But they may judge, if this pleases them, that 'the pains of the damned *are at certain intervals of time in some measure mitigated.*'"—*Enchiridion, c.* 111.

ST. JEROME, † 420.—"As we believe that the torments of the devil, and of all demons, and of the impious who have said in their heart that there is no God, are eternal, so of sinners, and of the impious who are still Christians, whose works are to be proved and purged in the fire, we think that the judge's sentence will be moderate and mingled with clemency." —*In. Is.*[1]

"If however Origen denies that reasonable creatures are to be destroyed, and attributes penitence to

whether they would be eternal, or rather to be estimated in accordance with the mercy of God, so as at some time to be terminated." And this language is very remarkable, because if this last sentence had not been added the passage would have been always quoted as a most decisive proof that this eminently great Father and theologian held, without any modification, the severest form of the doctrine of endless torments. For the views of the Gregories, see *infra*, pp. 249-262.

[1] "Sic peccatorum atque impiorum et tamen Christianorum quorum opera in igne probanda sunt atque purganda, moderatam arbitramur et mixtam clementiae sententiam judicis."—*Jer. in fin. comment. in Esaiam.*

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the devil, what is that to us, who say that the devil and his servants, and the impious, perish eternally, and that *Christians, if they have been overtaken by death, are to be saved after punishments?*"—*In Pelag.*[1]

ST. MARTIN, † 397 (QUOTED BY SULPICIUS SEVERUS, *De Vita B. Martini*, p. 488, ed. 1647).—Addressing the devil, St. Martin is reported to have said, "If thou thyself, O wretched one, wouldst desist from the persecution of man, and wouldst even now repent of thy deeds when the Day of Judgment is very near, I, with true assurance in the Lord, would promise to thee the pity of Christ."

[This is an anticipation by centuries of Burns's famous

> "Oh, wad ye tak' a thocht and men'!
> Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
> Still hae a stake—"

except that the mediæval saint speaks with far more confidence than the Ayrshire ploughman.]

PETER LOMBARD, † 1160.—"*That some sins are remitted after this life, Christ shows in the Gospel* (Matt. xii. 32). Whence it may be understood, as holy doctors teach, that some sins are pardoned in the future. . . . But in that cleansing fire some are purged more slowly, some more speedily, according as they have loved those perishing things less or more . . . . . Those who build gold, silver, precious stones, are secure from either fire: not only from that eternal fire which will torture the impious for ever, but even from that fire of emendation in which some will be purged who are to be saved."—*Sentent.* iv. *dict.* xxi. A.B.

During the middle ages the hopes afforded by the doctrine of Purgatory sufficed, amid "the deep slumber of decided opinions," to make men tolerate

[1] Hieron. *In Pelag.* i. On the Views of St. Jerome, see further, *infra*, pp. 281-287

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the lurid pictures of "Hell," as Dante, for instance, paints them. Yet both St. Thomas Aquinas and Durandus show us that, even in their day, absolute Universalism was not unknown. It was the opinion of the school of Gilbert of Poictiers (St. Thos. Aqu. *Sent.* iv. 45, 2) and "aliquorum juristarum" (Durandus).

ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON, † 1694.—"It can in no sense be said to agree with the justice of God to punish temporary crimes with eternal punishments, because if justice preserves a proportion between offences, between temporal sins and eternal punishments, there can be no manner of proportion. And if it be so hard to reconcile this with the justice of God, it will be much more to explain how it can possibly consist with that infinite mercy and goodness which we so much ascribe to Him."—*Serm.* xxv.[1]

RICHARD COPPIN, † 1655.—"God hath declared in Scripture, both by the mouths of the prophets and apostles, the salvation of all men, without respect of persons (1 Tim. ii. 4-6). Thus we may say, 'Lord, who hath resisted Thy will? Let Thy will be done.' Paul says that as by one man death came to all, so by One life and salvation to all; else Christ were not sufficient to save all that Adam lost."—*Truth's Testimony.*

J. ALFORD, M.A., FELLOW OF ORIEL, 1644.—The title of the book was *The Church Triumphant, a comfortable treatise of the amplitude and largeness of Christ's kingdom; wherein is proved by Scripture and Reason that the number of the damned is inferior to that of the elect.*

GERARD WINSTANLEY, † 1669.—"He will dwell in the whole creation in time, and so deliver all mankind out of their fall."—*Mystery of God*, p. 9.

[1] His view was that God reserves a right to withdraw His own threatenings, as very remarkably in Jonah iv. 11; and all the more because His promises also are understood quite conditionally.—Num. xiv. 34; 1 Sam. ii. 30.

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R. STAFFORD, † 1693.—"'With righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity' (Ps. lxxxix. 9). Now equity is a mild thing which doth state, moderate, and adjust a matter. And then after all God will reserve mercy even after judgment and condemnation; for that is its proper place (Is. lvii. 18, Rom. xi. 32)."—*Some Thoughts of the Life to Come.*

BISHOP STILLINGFLEET, † 1699.—"Comminations do only speak the *delictum poenae* and the necessary obligation to punishment; but therein God doth not bind Himself as in absolute promises: the reason is because commination confers no right to any which absolute promises do, and therefore God is not bound to necessary performance of what He threatens."—*Ol. Sacr.* i. 222.

REV. DR. THOMAS BURNET (MASTER OF THE CHARTERHOUSE, AUTHOR OF THE *Theory of the Earth*), † 1715.—"Several things have occurred to me . . . by which I am sensible that others have been persuaded, as well as myself, that God neither wills nor can endure the perpetual affliction and torment of His own creatures."—*De Statu Mortuorum*, p. 343.

DISSERTATION ON FUTURE PUNISHMENTS (printed with *Barrow's Sermons and Fragments* in 1834).—"It has never been well resolved to the satisfaction of human understanding how such temporal offences as are committed by men in this world under so many temptations and infirmities of nature . . . should be justly punishable with an eternity of extreme torments, which is a severity of justice far above all severity of cruelty in the worst of men. . . . The doctrine has so plain an appearance of repugnancy to the essential goodness of God, and is by human reason so hardly reconcilable thereto, that it is not to be accepted on less terms than plain demonstration from Scripture." [This treatise, *Whether the*

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damned after the last judgment shall live in everlasting torments, or be utterly destroyed, — in which the author accepts the latter alternative—is not Barrow's, and he was unconvinced by it; but in the margin he calls it "admodum ingeniosus, dilucidus, et candidus."]

DR. DODDRIDGE, † 1751.—"We cannot pretend to decide *à priori*, or previous to the event, so far as to say that the punishments of hell must and will be certainly eternal."—*Theolog. Lect.* prop. 1 and 3.

BENGEL, † 1752.—"*Ut sit Deus omnia in omnibus.* Significatur hic novum quiddam sed idem summum et perenne. Omnia (*adeoque omnes*) sine ulla interpellatione, nulla creatura obstante, nullo hoste obturbante, erunt subordinata Filio, Filius Patri. Hoc τέλος est, hic finis, et apex."—*Gnomon*, p. 760.

BISHOP NEWTON, † 1761.—"Nothing is more contrarient to the divine nature and attributes than for God to bestow existence on any beings whose destiny He foreknows must terminate in wretchedness without recovery."—*Dissert. on the Final State of Man.*

WILLIAM LAW, 1766 (AUTHOR OF THE *Serious Call*).—"As for the purification of all human nature either in this world or some after ages, I fully believe it."—*Letters*, p. 175.

"Every number of destroyed sinners must, through the all-working, all-redeeming love of God, which never ceaseth, come at last to know that they had lost, and have found again, such a God of love as this."

REV. CAPEL BERROW, M.A., RECTOR OF ROSSINGTON, 1772.—"The endless misery of the majority cannot be made reconcilable with any one attribute of the Deity whatever."—*Theolog. Dissert.* p. 11.

J. A. EBERHARD, 1778, PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY AT HALLE.—"Punishment, being an evil, cannot be employed by a good Being unless for ends whose goodness is greater than the evils, and which

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could not be obtained without inflicting them. God punishes not for the common good only, but also for the reform of the sufferer, which being accomplished, punishment has no further use."—*Neue Apologie der Sokrates.*

ARCHDEACON PALEY, † 1805.—At college he proposed as a thesis to be supported, "*Aeternitas poenarum contradicit divinis attributis.*" The Master of his college, Dr. Thomas, Dean of Ely, took alarm, and by the advice of Bishop Watson he inserted into the thesis the word *non.* Yet the books which he praises and the expressions which he uses, show that he differed from the popular theology, and he ends his *Natural Theology* by bidding us all to await death "under a firm and settled persuasion that, living and dying, we are God's; that life is passed in His constant presence; that death resigns us to His merciful dispensations." He also says, "It has been said that it can never be a just economy of Providence to admit one part of mankind into heaven and condemn the other to hell, since there must be very little to choose between the worst man who is received into heaven and the worst man who is excluded. And how know we, it might be answered, but that there may be as little to choose in their conditions?"—*Moral Philosophy*, i. 7.

REV. DR. HEY (NORRISIAN PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY, CAMBRIDGE), † 1815.—He expresses a hope "that all men will be happy ultimately, when punishment has done its work in reforming principles and conduct" (*Lectures*, iii. 154). And again, "The mind of man seeketh for some resource, and finds one only in conceiving that *some temporary punishment after death* may purify the soul from its moral pollution, and make it at last acceptable to a Deity infinitely pure."

DR. JOHN YOUNG (AUTHOR OF *Creator and Creation*).—"With great reverence I venture to express the

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conviction that if the Great Being foreknew . . . that eternal misery, conscious suffering, would be the doom of even a single creature, it is incredible that He would have given existence to that creature." He calls such a notion as "endless conscious suffering" "inconceivable and unendurable by any sound and sane conscience."

DR. CHEYNE, † 1742.—"Some individuals may be delivered sooner, some later, according as their expiation and purification is perfected; and at last the whole system and all its inhabitants must naturally and necessarily, but harmoniously and analogically, and according to general laws, undergo some great and general crise, and an universal gaol-delivery will be brought about, but when and how this will be accomplished is beyond conjecture."—*Discourses*, p. 27.

BISHOP EWING, † 1873.—"With me this final victory [of good over evil] is not a matter of speculation at all, but of absolute faith; and to disbelieve it would be for me to cease altogether either to trust or to worship God."

PROF. REUSS.—"If the highest glory consists in being all in all, it is plain that it would be a flaw in the perfection of God were He anything less than this; it would be a detraction from His glory if in some, and those the greater number of mankind, He should be nothing. In religion, conscience, no less than the logical sense, protests against any such imperfection in God and in the system."—*Théologie Chrétienne*, ii. 239.

CANON WESTCOTT, D.D.—"'And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me' (John xii. 32). All men: the phrase must not be limited in any way. It cannot mean merely 'Gentiles as well as Jews,' or 'the elect,' or 'all who believe.' We must receive it as it stands (Rom. v. 18, viii. 32; 2 Cor. v. 15; Eph. i. 10; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. ii. 9, 6; 1 John ii. 2). The remarkable reading 'all things' (*πάντα*, Vulg.

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omnia) points to a still wider application of Redemption (Col. i. 20)."—*Speaker's Commentary, New Test.* ii. 183.

REV. S. MINTON, M.A.—"We reject that tradition of man which has obscured the glory of Christ, reduced to an unmeaning form the doctrine that God is Love, produced a frightful amount of infidelity, robbed the Law of its terrors by making it threaten sinners with what they are sure will never be executed, incalculably weakened the saving power of the Gospel, and damaged the believer's whole spiritual constitution by putting upon it an unnatural strain that God never intended it to bear."—*Unworthy of Eternal Life*, p. 29.

REV. PREBENDARY CONSTABLE, M.A. — "The foundation of this theory" [that future punishment consisted of eternal life spent in eternal pain] "was a mere fancy, that which gave continuity to its parts was but a rope of sand."—*Future Punishment*, p. 9.

Such views are by no means confined to theologians of the Romish and Anglican Churches. They have been openly held, and are still held, in one form or other by some of the most learned and eloquent divines of Nonconformist communities.

Thus, among the Baptists, the REV. S. COX, Editor of the *Expositor* and of the *Expositor's Notebook*, writes in his keen and able book, *Salvator Mundi*:—"The main object of this book is to encourage those who 'faintly trust the larger hope' to commit themselves to it wholly and fearlessly, by showing them that they have ample warrant for it in the Scriptures of the New Testament."

Again, the REV. J. BALDWIN BROWN, who recently was President of the Independent Conference:—"And now that we are emerging from the terrible

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shadow of the doctrine, we look with a shudder, and ask ourselves how was it possible that Christian men should believe it, and should connect such unutterable horrors with the administration of a Being who has given to us in Calvary the measure of His love." —*Contemp. Rev.* i. p. 162.

The REV. R. W. DALE of Birmingham, the vigorous and thoughtful leader of the Independents in that town, says :—"The traditional theory of the endlessness of sin and of suffering has lost its authority. . . . The appeal to fear is being silently dropped. Augustine said that it very seldom or never happens that a man comes to believe in Christ except under the influence of terror. This sweeping statement . . . is flagrantly inconsistent with all that we know of the rise of Christian faith and hope in the souls of men in our own times." —Preface to *Dr. Petavel,* p. 7.

REV. T. P. FORSYTH, M.A., another able and eloquent Congregationalist, says :—"Punish a man for his sins, that is just: punish him for ages. . . that may be just: but make no end of punishing him for that sin, reduce him from a man to a devil, let him become for ever vile, that is not just. The only justice to a sinner in a case like our human one is mercy, is to make his punishment finite according to his works . . . and of such a nature as not simply to torment the man, but to drive him back to the way of God."

The REV. EDWARD WHITE, the devout and thoughtful author of *Life in Christ,* writes:—"It is vain to deny that the honest belief of misery to last through Eternity upon all the unsaved . . . endangers the faith of every thoughtful Christian who accepts it."—*Life in Christ,* p. 463.

The REV. HENRY ALLON, D.D., writes :—"It does not follow, however, that finality of moral condition implies unending being or unending consciousness of retribution. There is no moral necessity to suppose this, while both the finality and the symbolism are

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such as would probably find their adequate interpretation in the simple idea of finality—the ending of sin and of sinful being: whether by the natural cessation of the latter—which seems the most plausible—or by other processes, we are not told."—*Contemporary Review.*[1]

Once again, similar views are expressed, often extending into Universalism and Conditional Immortality, by an ever-increasing number of theologians and pastors in the Reformed Churches of Europe, and also among the Roman Catholics, to whom however the belief in Purgatory has supplied a sensible mitigation of the full horrors of our popular theology.

Thus M. Guillaume Monod, the venerable brother of Adolphe Monod, has for twenty years preached that all men would be saved.[2] Père Ravignan († 1858), one of the most eloquent preachers in France, advocated views in accordance with my own, and said that they predominate even in the Society of Jesus. The leading preacher in the French Protestant Church has adopted similar opinions. That the view of "conditional immortality" is now almost universally prominent among the members of that Church, was clearly shown in their synod at Marseilles in October, 1880. Dr. Ernest Petavel advocates the immortality of the blessed alone. The theological faculty of Neuchâtel teaches in their text-book of instruction that "the condition of a portion of the lost will finally become tolerable." Neander, Tholuck, Ritschl, Hase, Schulz, Gess, Olshausen, Rothe, Reuss, Bishop Martensen,[3] are

[1] Many other names, as for instance that of Dr. Parker, might be added.

[2] See an extract from one of his sermons, *supra*, p. 37.

[3] For Professors Schulz of Göttingen, and Gess of Breslau, see Byse's French translation of Mr. White's *Life in Christ*, pp. xviii. and xx. For the views of Ravignan see his *Conférences*, ii. 521, and Allies' *Journal in France*, p. 279.

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but a few out of many who have seen and maintained the absolute necessity of supplementing by the views of earlier Christian ages the crude negations of the Reformation Eschatology. Dr. Carl Nitzsch, the well-known author of the *System of Christian Doctrine*, says, "The idea of eternal damnation and punishment is in so far a necessary one that there cannot be in eternity any forced holiness of the personal being, or any blessed unholiness. On the other hand there is no foundation for assuming that the truth of God's Word and the kingdom of God itself need the existence of beings everlastingly condemned, or that God should maintain the existence of a personal being in eternity in order to deprive him of the possibility of eternal holiness and blessedness."—*System*, p. 219.

Whether any of the great writers whom I have quoted, living or dead, may have desired their words to be understood with any modifications, I cannot tell. I only say that these passages, many of them from divines of unimpeachable orthodoxy, and deeply reverenced both in the English, Roman, and other churches, have not hesitated, in these passages at any rate, to express a hope which is often even wider and more universal than that for which I argued. Saints and theologians have repudiated all that I repudiated, and have claimed far more than I saw my way to claim in the way of hope for suffering men.

I will now adduce a few other passages which express that belief in the final annihilation of the wicked which is generally known by the name of "Conditional Immortality." This, again, is a view which I cannot accept. I believe, as the Church in all ages with few exceptions seems to have believed, that the soul of man is endowed by God with

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immortality. It would indeed as a matter of choice be infinitely less terrible to suppose that extinction rather than that endless torment will be the fate of the obstinately wicked; and I fully admit that the literal and inferential meaning of many Scriptural passages seems at first sight to point in the direction of this opinion. I will not here enter into any discussion of it, because it lies apart from the view with which I am directly concerned. For it must be borne in mind that I have never professed to be writing a systematic treatise on Eschatology, but have only tried to separate from Christian eschatology the human additions and inventions by which it is defaced, and to show that it has been surrounded by elements of hopelessness and horror which are not sanctioned by the teaching of Scripture or of the Church. Now the "Annihilationists" hold that the soul is not immortal, and that the agonies of retribution will end for all, because extinction of being will be the fate of the finally impenitent. I, on the other hand, believe that the soul is by the will of God immortal, and have never denied the possibility of even an endless and a hopeless alienation from the peace of God. But without accepting their positive conclusion, I agree with many of their negative results. Believing that much of the popular eschatology is founded on misinterpretation, I feel confirmed in that opinion by seeing how many devout, able, and earnest men have come to the same conclusion, and are unable to accept as Scriptural the "hell" of the Revivalist.

The following then are a few passages out of many in which Christian writers imply, or seem to imply, the final annihilation of the wicked,—a belief which, though uncatholic, has been held by many eminent thinkers, and is now maintained by many thousands of Christians. The fact that so many hold it unchallenged in the bosom of various Christian Churches shows at any rate that the evidence

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for the popular views of endless torments is not so decisive as to enable any Christian body to demand a belief in them as a part of its necessary faith.

Letter to DIOGNETUS. [Early in 2nd Century.]—"Thou shalt fear what is truly death, which is reserved for those condemned to the aeonian fire, which shall afflict those committed to it till the end" (μέχρι τέλους).—*Cap.* x.

ST. JUSTIN MARTYR, † 167.—"The righteous, being worthy to appear before God, shall not die any more, and the evil shall be punished so long as it shall please God that they exist and be punished."—*Dial. cum Tryph.* c. 5.[1]

ARNOBIUS, † circ. 303.—"This is man's real death—this which leaves nothing behind."

JOHN LOCKE, † 1704.—"By death some men understand endless torments in hell-fire. But it seems a strange way of understanding a law which requires the plainest and directest words that by death should be meant eternal life in misery. Can any one be supposed to intend by a law which says, 'For felony thou shalt surely die,' not that he should lose his life, but be kept alive in exquisite and perpetual torments?"

ARCHBISHOP NEWCOME, † 1800.—"Whatever sentiments thinking men, intimately acquainted with the Scriptures, entertain on this subject, whether that God will for ever inflict a positive punishment on the wicked; or that after a punishment exactly proportioned to their offence He will annihilate them; or that a privation of being by fire will be the mode of everlasting destruction with which He will punish them, revelation is express that their punishment will be dreadful, and coeval with their existence."—*Character of Christ.*

WHITBY, † 1726.—"This fire may be called eternal, not that the bodies of the wicked shall be for ever

[1] See *infra*, pp. 235-238.

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burning in it, and never be consumed by it, since this cannot be done without a constant miracle, but because it shall so entirely consume their bodies as that they shall never subsist again, but shall perish and be destroyed for ever by it."—*On 2 Thess.* (*Comment. on the Epistles*, p. 391, Ed. 1700.)

DR. ISAAC WATTS, † 1748.—"Who can say whether the word death might be fairly construed to extend to the utter destruction of the . . . life of the soul, as well as of the body?"—*World to Come.*

S. T. COLERIDGE, † 1834.—"I am confident that the doctrine (of Conditional Immortality) would be a far stronger motive than the present; for no man will believe eternal misery of himself, but millions would admit that if they did not mend their lives they would be undeserving of living for ever."

OLSHAUSEN, † 1839.—"The Bible knows nothing of the modern dogma of the immortality of the soul . . . on the contrary, God is called there He who alone hath immortality."

DR. C. J. NITZSCH, † 1844.—"The soul, being dependent on the Creator, does not possess immortality. As sin increases the soul faces destruction in hell and its death. Matt. x. 28; Rev. xx. 15."—*System of Christian Doctrine*, § 122.

ARCHBISHOP WHATELY, † 1863.—"As the effect of worms or fire is not to preserve the body they prey upon, but to destroy and put an end to it, it would follow, if the correspondence hold good, that the fire, figuratively so-called, which is prepared for the condemned, is something that is really to destroy and put an end to them, and is called everlasting and unquenchable to denote that they are not to be saved under it, but that their destruction is to be final."—*Lectures on a Future State.*

DR. R. ROTHE, † 1870.—"Only one conclusion remains. We are obliged to admit that the sufferings endured in hell by the reprobate will in reality end,

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but that the end will consist in the destruction of the guilty. This idea is very ancient in the Church. . . This opinion alone seems capable of satisfying all the conditions. It has nothing to fear from contemporary philosophy, for men have ceased to maintain that the human soul possesses a natural immortality." —*Dogmatik*, iii. 158.

DR. THOMSON, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.—"Life to the godless must be the beginning of destruction, since nothing but God and that which pleases Him can permanently exist."—*Bampton Lectures*, p. 56.

Here then I have collected upwards of one hundred passages from writers of all ages—many of them of the highest eminence—who have lived and died in full communion with the Catholic Church, and who yet use language more or less entirely irreconcilable with the popular theology. And yet numerous as these passages are they do not represent a tithe of those which might have been adduced. Subsequent chapters will, however, prove still more convincingly that even the Fathers and the Schoolmen held doctrines more tenable and more merciful than those which too many of our modern preachers have inculcated—"teaching for doctrine the commandments of men."[1]

[1] On p. 24, I have given rather the sense than the words of Luther. He says:—"Das wäre wohl ein ander Frag, ob Gott etlichen im Sterben *oder nach dem Sterben*, den Glauben könnt geben, und also durch den Glauben könnt selig machen? Wer wollt darin zweifeln, dass er das thun kunne?"

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CHAPTER III.

ON PURGATORY; THE DESCENT OF CHRIST INTO HELL; PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD; MITIGATIONS; AND THE MILDER ASPECT OF FUTURE RETRIBUTION.

> "And these two pains, so counter and so keen,
> The longing for Him whom thou seest not,
> The shame of self at thought of seeing Him,
> Shall be thy keenest, sharpest purgatory."
>
> NEWMAN, *Dream of Gerontius.*

"One has in one's darkness and limitation a trembling faith, and can at least, with the voices, say '*Wir heissen euch hoffen,*' if it be the will of the Highest."—CARLYLE'S *Reminiscences*, ii. 48.

THUS far then we see that, owing to the dark veil which hangs between us and the future life, and owing to the dim character of God's revelation respecting its details, all the following views, as well as many others slightly differing from them in minor points, have been taught by Christians within the pale of the Catholic Church:—

That the vast majority of mankind will be lost. —CALVIN, and the popular theology.

That all men will at last be saved.[1]—ORIGEN, and Universalists in all ages.

[1] "Qui salvus fit per ignem salvus fit, ut, si quid forte de specie plumbi habuerit admixtum, id ignis decoquat et resolvat, ut efficiantur *omnes* aurum purum."—ORIG. *Hom. VI. in Exod.*

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That all *Christians* will at last be saved.[1]—ST. JEROME, and many in his day.

That all who died within the pale of the Catholic Church would be saved.—Many in the Fifth century.

That the wicked will be finally annihilated.—Many in the early Church and in modern days.

That God has indeed threatened endless punishments, but only conditionally, and in such a way that He may not carry out the threat.—TILLOTSON, &c.

That the condition of the saved will pass by indistinguishable degrees into the condition of the lost.—PALEY, &c.

That there is an intermediate state of preparation and purification in which sinful and imperfect souls may be prepared for heaven.—The FATHERS generally, and many modern theologians.

That the condition of the lost, even when endless, is not incompatible with a resignation and penitence almost akin to happiness.

That there is no intermediate state, but that, in the words of the Westminster Confession, "souls neither die nor sleep, but go immediately to heaven or hell."[2]

That the judgment which punishes the sins may yet preserve all that is not sinful in the sinner,—saving the workman, burning the works.

That between death and the resurrection there is a *psychopannychia*—in other words, a sleep of the soul so long as it remains in its bodiless condition, to be re-awakened at the resurrection for final judgment.

Different from all these is the distinctive creed of the Roman Church. Their doctrine is that all who die in a state of grace, and yet in a state unfit for heaven, will be purified in a purgatorial fire. Among their divines—as among all divines—there have been

[1] See Jer. *Comment. in Is. in fin.*; *supra*, p. 43.
[2] This was also the view of Calvin, *Inst.* iii. 25.

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many differences of opinion, but they all agree in the general statements of the Council of Trent and the Creed of Pope Pius IV. The decree passed in the twenty-fifth session of the Council of Trent was as follows :—

"Since the decree of the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Spirit out of the sacred writings and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, hath taught in holy Councils, and lastly in this Oecumenical Synod, that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls detained there are aided by the suffrages of the faithful, but most of all in the acceptable sacrifice of the altar, this Holy Synod enjoins all bishops diligently to endeavour that the wholesome doctrine of Purgatory, handed down by Holy Fathers and Sacred Councils be believed by Christ's faithful, held, taught, and everywhere preached."

All that is asserted in the Creed of Pope Pius IV. is that "I constantly believe that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls there detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful."

In the Catechism of the Council of Trent we find, "There is a purgatory fire in which the souls of the faithful, being tormented for a certain time, are expiated, that so a passage may be opened for them into their eternal country, into which no defiled thing can enter."[1]

The Council of Florence (A.D. 1439) decreed "that if true penitents depart in the love of God before they have satisfied for their sins of omission or commission

[1] "Praeterea est purgatorius ignis quo piorum animae ad definitum tempus cruciatae expiantur ut eis in aeternam patriam ingressus patere possit, in quam nihil coinquinatum ingreditur."—*Cat. de Symbolo, Art. Descendit in Inferno.* This, it will be observed, goes beyond the decree of the council, because (1) it mentions "fire"; (2) it substitutes *cruciatae* for *detentae.* Bellarmine, following St. Thomas Aquinas, lays it down as the teaching of almost all their theologians that the fire of purgatory is the same kind of fire as that of hell (*De Purgat.* ii. 6), and "minimam poenam purgatorii esse majorem maxima poena hujus vitae."

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by fruits of repentance, their souls go to Purgatory to be purged."

Now in our English Church the Twenty-second Article speaks of "the Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory," with other doctrines of that Church, as "a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God."

It becomes then a very important thing for us to know what the English Church intended to reject in thus repudiating the Romish doctrine of Purgatory, since "there is no ground for thinking that in rejecting the popular Romish doctrine the Church of England meant to reject all suffering after this life."[1]

I should say at once that I have not the least interest in defending what is generally known as "the Romish doctrine of Purgatory." Just as endless confusion has been introduced into the thoughts of Christians by the adoption of the word "hell" to represent alike Sheol,[2] Hades, and Gehenna, and by the fact that the words "hell" and "damnation" have come to be used in senses far darker than those which were originally attached to them; so too the word "Purgatory"[3] has been mixed up by Romish divines with a mass of untenable notions from which it can never be entirely dissociated. Even apart from these notions which are touched upon in the following words "of indulgences and pardons,"[4] in our Twenty-second

[1] Dr. Pusey, *Eirenicon*, p. 197. For moderate and forcible statements of the doctrine see Dr. Newman's *Development*, p. 388; *Via Media*, p. 175.

[2] "In our English translation the word 'hell' seems to speak that that is neither warrantable by Scripture nor reason."—LIGHTFOOT, *Disc. on the Fourth Article of the Creed* (*Works*, ii. 1350, ed. 1684). "The word hell is now come to signifie only the place of torment, but of old it signified larger, as the word Hades does."—*Ib.* p. 1351.

[3] Far more, it should be said, by individual divines—as, for instance, Bellarmine—than by any conciliar decrees. The Council of Trent expressed itself very moderately.

[4] "The doctrine of purgatory is the mother of indulgences."—JER. TAYLOR, *Dissuasive from Popery*, i. ch. i.

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Article, it can hardly be said that the simplest essential conception of Purgatory as a place of "purification *in penal fire* (whether material or immaterial) for the faithful dead," is with any distinctness revealed in Scripture, or that it was at all recognised as an article of faith in the earliest centuries. And yet since the Church did not, in her articles, condemn either the doctrine of the Intermediate State or the practice of prayer for the dead, and since she pronounced no opinion whatever on the probatory fire of the day of judgment which so many of the Fathers deduced from the words of St. Paul in 1 Cor. iii. 15,[1] it is clear that the Reformers did not at any rate hold the belief about the sleep of souls (*psychopannychia*), nor endorse the view of Calvin, which is still the common view of the uninstructed masses, that every soul at death passes directly and irrevocably to hell or to heaven. For what are the facts?

The Twenty-second Article now runs:—"The Romish doctrine of Purgatory, &c., is a fond thing vainly invented and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God."[2]

Such is the Article of 1562. But in the Article of 1552 it stood "doctrina scholasticorum," not "doctrina Romanensium."[3] Now it has been fairly

[1] Archbishop Usher, after noticing this, says that the reader "may easily discern what may be thought of the cracking Cardinal [Bellarmine], who would force us down that 'all the ancients, both Greek and Latin, from the very time of the Apostles, did constantly teach that there was a Purgatory,' whereas eminent Romish controversialists have themselves admitted that 'in ancient writers there is almost no mention of Purgatory, especially in the Greek writers.'" He calls Bellarmine's quotation "counterfeit stuff," which refers to this life, or the conflagration of the world, or the fire prepared for the devil, &c. He finds the first traces of a Purgatory, properly so-called, in Tertullian (who, he says, derived it from Montanus), and in Origen.

[2] "Doctrina Romanensium de purgatorio, de indulgentiis, &c. res est futilis, inaniter conficta, et nullis Scripturatum testimoniis innititur; immo verbo Dei contradicit."

[3] Perrone says, "The Latin Church, by uniting with the Eastern, has allowed the scholastic opinion of a material fire in purgatory . . . to

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argued that the Article could not have been intended for a categorical condemnation of the very cautious and modified decree of the Council of Trent, because that decree was not promulgated till December 4, 1563, nearly a year after this edition of the Article was published. "The Romish doctrine of purgatory" was probably substituted for "the doctrine of the school authors," because it was, as Dr. Boultbee says, "more popularly intelligible."[1] It must be admitted that originally the doctrine condemned by our Reformers was the doctrine as it stands in the pages of the schoolmen, not as it is stated by the Council of Trent; and further, as Bishop Forbes points out, the word Romanenses, like Romanistae, is used to represent the extreme mediæval party,—those whom we now call Ultramontanes.[2]

Now the doctrine of the schoolmen may be described generally as the mediæval doctrine: the doctrine which, taking its start from the speculations of Origen[3] in the third century, acquired distinctive shape first in the still-wavering utterances of Augustine,[4] and then in the dialogues of St. Gregory the Great. That the mind of St. Augustine was by no means made up respecting this subject, I shall show clearly farther on. Sometimes he seems to be thinking of what is now called "purgatory"; but sometimes rather

drop; and the substance of the doctrine can cause no further offence if once the gross abuses and misapprehensions are removed which have incrusted its kernel in practice and popular belief." [If the same words be applied to "hell," they will accurately express my own opinion.]

[1] *Theology of the Church of England*, p. 185.

[2] Bishop Forbes, *On the Articles*, ii. 301.

[3] It is generally admitted that Origen was influenced by the writings of Plato.

[4] "St. Austin speaks in this whole matter very doubtfully; he varies often from himself; he seems sometimes very positive only for two states; at other times as he asserts the last probatory fire, so he seems to think that good souls might suffer some grief in that sequestered state before the last day upon the account of some other past sins, and that by degrees they might arise up to their consummation."—BURNET on Art. xxii.

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of the purgatory at the end of the world; and sometimes only of "that grief which he imagined those souls who had been passionately tied to the things of this world might still retain in their place of sequester. But all this he proposes with so much doubt and uncertainty, as plainly shows it to have been in the Father's time so far from an article of faith, that he durst not affirm anything at all concerning it. . . Thus had the Romish doctrine of purgatory no manner of foundation in the Primitive Church." So says Archbishop Wake, and we need no further proof of St. Augustine's uncertainty than his own words, "whether it be so or not may be inquired: and possibly it may be found so, and possibly not."[1] But by the close of the sixth century we find Pope Gregory the First saying, with an emphasis and plainness not known in earlier ages, that "for some light faults we must believe that there is before judgment a purgatorial fire."[2]

St. Gregory († 604) flourished in days when the age of barbarism had begun. His dialogues abound in legends and visions, and are the chief source of the popular notions about hell and purgatory in the middle ages. The importance which was attached to these valueless stories—such as that of the appearance of Paschasius to St. Germanus; of Justus to Copiosus; of Vitaliana to St. Martin, of St. Severinus, &c.—may be seen from the use made of them even by so acute a controversialist as Cardinal Bellarmine. Then, says Archbishop Wake, "the flames of Ætna and Vesuvius were thought on purpose to have been kindled to torment departed souls. Some were seen broiling upon gridirons, others roasting upon spits,[3] others

[1] *Enchirid.* c. lxix.; see too lxvii., lxviii.; *Ad. Dulcit.* qu. l.; *De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 18-22.

[2] Greg. *Dial.* iv. 30. Schröckh goes so far as to call him "Der Erfinder des Fegefeuer's."—*Kirchengesch*, xvii. 332.

[3] Specimens without number may be found in the *Speculum Exemplorum* and the *Legenda Aurea*. Those to which I have alluded are called

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shivering in the water, or choking in chimneys. The very ways to purgatory were now discovered, one in Sicily, another in Pozzuetto, a third nearer home in Ireland.[1] In the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries the opinion grew, yet even in the twelfth (A.D. 1196) Otho Frisingensis,[2] so far from speaking dogmatically, only says there are some who affirm that there is in the lower world a purgatory, in which those who are to be saved are either kept in darkness only, or are purged in the fire of expiation."[3] It is to such crude conceptions as those found in St. Gregory and the schoolmen that the words of Archbishop Usher apply, "For extinguishing the imaginary flames of the Popish purgatory we need not go far to fetch water."[4]

The scholastic doctrine of purgatory may be found reflected in the frightful *Inferno* of Dante; and the part played by the wild visions of monks and ascetics in stereotyping the ordinary conception may be judged by the fact that Dante[5] largely borrowed his notions of infernal torments from the vision of Alberic published in the twelfth century, at Monte Cassino.[6] It may also be found, though in a modified form, very clearly delineated in the supplement to the *Summa* of St. Thomas of Aquinas, and in Bellarmine *De Purgatorio*.[7] Bellarmine decides that purgatory, hell, and the

specially authentic by Bellarmine, i. ii. They are taken from Gregory of Tours, A.D. 573; Pope Gregory, A.D. 660; Bede, A.D. 700; Peter Damian, A.D. 1057; and St. Bernard, A.D. 1100.

[1] A full account of this will be seen in Mr. Wright's *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, 1844.

[2] Chronic. viii. 26. "Esse locum purgatorium . . . quidam asserunt."

[3] Archbishop Wake, *Discourse of Purgatory* (in Gibson's *Preservative*, vol. v.).

[4] Archbishop Usher, *Answer to a Jesuit*, vi. p. 118.

[5] Bellarmine, *Disp. de Controv. Christianae Fidei*, i. pp. 1962-2081, ed. 1596. His definition of Purgatory is "locus quidam, in quo tamquam in carcere post hanc vitam purgantur animae, quae in hac non plane purgatae fuerunt."

[6] See Ozanam, *Les Poëtes Franciscains*, p. 415.

[7] *De Purgatorio*, ii. 6 and *passim*.

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limbus Patrum and the *limbus Puerorum* are all in the centre of the earth; argues that the fire of purgatory is material; quotes the testimonies of St. Gregory and Bede to show that the pains of purgatory are more intense than any which we can suffer in life; and accepts the whole doctrine that souls in purgatory are aided by "the sacrifice of the mass, prayers, penances, alms, pilgrimages, and so forth."[1] And in support of these views he adduces the evidence of visions, and the authorities of St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventura, and other schoolmen. To some at any rate of these views the Church would not have hesitated to apply the epithet *perniciosa* which stood in the earlier Articles, but was afterwards entirely dropped.

And yet we shall long have to deplore the fact that the teaching of the Reformers on this subject was so vague and negative. They were mainly occupied with other and far different controversies. Machyn in his diary tells us that on January 30, 1559, "dyd prech Master Juell, the new Bishop of Salesbury, and then he sayd playnly there was no pergatore." Would that in preaching that there was "no pergatore" the Reformers had told us their view of the true doctrine! They might, with Luther, have condemned "purgatory" as a mere "devil's mask" (*mera diaboli larva*), but such a condemnation would not at all necessarily imply any view on their part that there was no purification of imperfect and sinful souls (whether penal or probatory) beyond the grave. They condemned "purgatory" in the lump, and such a condemnation no more involves the view now held by most thoughtful divines, whether Protestant or Catholic, than (as I shall show hereafter) a general condemnation of "Origenism" excluded an approval even of Origen's universalism. Neumann, Schulze, Karsten, Martensen, Dr. Pusey, and many living High Churchmen may

[1] *De Purgatorio*, ii. 16.

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be mentioned among Protestants who accept the belief in this modified phase of Purgatory.

Further than this, the "doctrine of Purgatory"—whether scholastic or Roman—is inextricably entangled, with views "all dubious and disputable at the very best"[1] about the distinction of sins mortal and venial in their own nature;[2] that the taking away the guilt of sin does not suppose the taking away the obligation to punishment;[3] that God requires a full exchange of penance and satisfaction, which must regularly be paid here or hereafter, even by those who are pardoned here; and that the death of Christ, His merits and satisfaction, do not procure for us a full remission before we die, nor (as it may happen) for a long time after.[4]

"They imagine," says Hooker, "beyond all conceit of antiquity, that when God doth remit sin, and the punishment eternal thereunto belonging, He reserveth the torments of hell-fire to be nevertheless endured for a time, either shorter or longer, according to the quality of men's crimes. So that by this postern gate cometh in the whole mart of papal indulgences; a scorn both to God and man."[5]

These assuredly are not doctrines of the English Church, and her decisive rejection of "purgatory, indulgences, and pardons," is the rejection not of an isolated opinion, but of *a system* with which all these views and details are indissolubly associated. "It was

[1] Jer. Taylor, *Dissuasive*, i. 1; *Works*, vi. p. 194, ed. Heber.

[2] "Purgatorium pro iis tantum esse, qui cum venialibus culpis moriuntur."—BELLARM. *De Purgat.* ii. 2, following Tert. *De Anima*, 35; Aug. *De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 26, "Venialia concremantem ignem." "Medium vero locum esse habentium peccata venialia."—LABBEUS, *Conc.* xvii. 20.

[3] "Those who depart this life in grace, in charity, but nevertheless indebted to the divine justice some pains which it deserved, are to suffer them in the other life."—BOSSUET. "Ad purgatorium deferuntur justorum animae obnoxiae poenis temporalibus."—DENS, *Theolog.* iii. 347.

[4] Jer. Taylor, *l. c.*, pp. 194, 195.

[5] *Eccl. Pol.* iii. v. 9. See too Hooker, *Serm. III.*

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not," says Bishop Forbes, "the formulated doctrine, but a current and corrupt practice in the Latin Church which is here declared to be 'fond' and 'vainly invented.'" In fact *the word* purgatory carried with it all these abuses. "The fire of purgatory," said the vulgar mediæval proverb, "boils the monk's saucepan."

But perhaps it is due to a guiding Providence that the Church has been withheld from laying down "as of faith" any distinct doctrine as to the state of the dead between death and the day of judgment.

1. The ancient Fathers are nearly as unanimous in recognising an Intermediate State[1] as popular teaching is unanimous in speaking of "dying and going straight to heaven or to hell."[2] Justin Martyr says that persons who used such language were not to be considered Christians or even Jews."[3] Tertullian, Lactantius, Origen, Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine are all perfectly explicit on this point, and to our own Reformers it seemed so clear that the entrance on the state of aeonian joy or sorrow was not decided till the resurrection, that, in the Fortieth Article of 1552, they imply their belief in the Intermediate State by their express condemnation of the fancy of psychopannychia, or the inanition of the soul between death and judgment.

2. The ancient Fathers also speak almost unanimously of *a fire of purgation after this life*[4] and

[1] The opinions of Origen, Tertullian, Chrysostom, the two Gregories, Jerome, Athanasius, &c., may be seen collected in Sixtus Senensis, vi. 264; Huet, *Origeniana*, ii. xi. 15; Bellarmine, *De Sanct. Beat.* i. 4.

[2] Bishop Harold Browne says, "I think it hardly necessary to add more to show that on this point the opinion of the ancients is more correct than the modern popular creeds."—*On the Articles*, p. 86. See many passages in Usher, *l.c.* pp. 120 *seq.*

[3] οἵ καὶ λέγουσι . . ἅμα τῷ ἀποθνήσκειν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἀναλαμβάνεσθαι εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, μὴ ὑπολάβητε αὐτοὺς Χριστιάνους ὥσπερ οὐδὲ Ἰουδαίους.—JUST. MARTYR, *Dial.* See too Bishop Bull, *Serm. III.*; *Works*, i. p. 52; Pearson, *Art. V.*; Dodwell, *Tertullian*, pp. 116 *seq.*

[4] Origen, Ep. Rom. *ad fin.*; Ambrose in Ps. xvi. 3; in Ps. cviii. ("omnes oportet transire per ignem"); Hilary in Ps. cxviii. 20.

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their sayings have been repeatedly urged by Romish controversialists to prove the doctrine of purgatory. But it has been sufficiently shown that the Fathers are usually speaking of a fire at the day of judgment, and not of purgatory. It is asserted, says Archbishop Wake, by almost all the Fathers of the Primitive Church, "that all men, being raised up at the last day, should pass through a certain probatory fire (πῦρ δοκιμαστικόν), in which every man should be scorched and purified;[1] and some be tormented more, others less, according as they had lived better or worser lives here upon earth."[2] Yet respecting all the details of this subject the Fathers vary in their language,[3] and they express this opinion, *as* an opinion, without laying it down as a matter of faith. Perhaps, therefore, it was best on the whole that, on such topics, the Church should pronounce no dogmatic decision; and the more so because an astonishing diversity of views may be proved to have existed in all ages. Even an eminent Cardinal says, in the eighteenth article of his book against Luther,

("judicium quo nobis est ille indefessus ignis obeundus"); Basil in Is. ix. 19; Jer. in Am. vii. 4 ("cumque omnes fuerimus in peccato, et jacuerimus ad sententiae severitatem, miserebitur Dominus nostri"); Sixtus Senensis, who quotes these and other passages, says, "Ab horum sententiis apparent satis esse diversa quae tradunt omnes theologi scholastici de igne ultimae conflagrationis."—*Bibl. Sanct.* v. annot. clxxi. Many similar passages are adduced by Dallaeus, *De Poenis et Satisf.* 387-434, and some are quoted in *Tracts for the Times*, No. 79. The same notion is found among the Rabbis, who say that "even a righteous man is conducted through hell by way of atonement for his offences."—*Emek Hammelech*, f. 23, 4; *Malleh Aharon*, f. 51, 1 *ap.* Stehelin, i. 45.

[1] "Diem judicii concupiscemus in quo subeunda sunt gravia illa expiandae a peccatis animae supplicia."—HILAR. in Ps. cxviii. 3.

[2] Archbishop Wake, *Discourse*, p. 5.

[3] See Origen in Ps. xxxvi. *Hom.* iii. 1; in Exod. *Hom.* vi. 4; Lactant. *Instt.* vii. 21; Greg. Naz. *Or.* xxxix.; Greg. Nyss. *De Mortuis*; Hilary in Ps. cxviii. lit. *Gimel.*; Aug. *De Civ. Dei*, xvi. 24; xx. 25; xxi. 26; *Enchir.* lxix., &c. Some of them held that "even Peter and John" (Ambrose in Ps. cxviii. *Hom.* xx.), even the Virgin Mary (Hilary, *l.c.*) would have to pass through this fire.

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"It (purgatory) was for a long time unknown; it was recognised late by the Universal Church; then it was gradually believed by some, by little and little, partly from Scripture, partly from revelations."[1] Though a sort of nominal adhesion to it was given by the eighteen Bishops of the Eastern Church at the Council of Florence, their adhesion was summarily repudiated by the Eastern Church in general, and the decrees of the Council were not acknowledged.[2]

Alexander Natalis[3] reduces the whole controversy between Protestants and Roman Catholics to this, "Whether the faith teaches that there is a state of the dead in which they shall be expiated by temporary punishment, and from which they may be freed or otherwise helped by the prayers of the Church." But the Church of England does not assent even to this most general statement. That there is an Intermediate State all her best divines would admit; and also that prayer for the dead was an ancient and almost universal practice; and also that Christ descended into Hades in the sense that He entered into the world of spirits; but she has nowhere laid down the inferences to be drawn from these premisses, but left them as open questions to individual opinion. Nor has she ever given the least sanction to the strange view that even the saints of God must pass through penal fire, and that a certain amount of punishment is (so to speak) a quantitative equivalent for a certain amount of sin. But I agree with Dr. Pusey[4] in thinking that the Church of England has not rejected and never meant to reject *all* suffering

[1] Cardinal Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, *Assert. Luther. Confut.* 18. So too Bruys (*Hist.* i. 375) admits that Purgatory was "unknown to the Apostles and original Christians." See Edgar, *Variations of Popery*, p. 452.

[2] Archbishop Wake, as above. Usher, *Answer to a Jesuit*, vi, p. 131 (where passages from eminent Greek theologians are quoted). See Jer. Taylor, *Of Purgatory*, ii. § 2; Gibbon, vi. 240, 260 (ed. Milman).

[3] iv. 41.

[4] *Eirenicon*, p. 197.

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after this life even for some who will ultimately be saved.

Cardinal Wiseman is reported to have said "that the belief that there would be suffering in the day of judgment would satisfy the doctrine of Purgatory." If so, many English Churchmen would find little difficulty respecting it. They might prefer, for the avoidance of mistakes, to call the Intermediate State, with any purifications or retributive sufferings which it may involve, by some other name than Purgatory, just as many theologians of the Greek Church do; but, as a Greek theologian says, while they shun the name as though it were something frightful, they believe in different conditions of the dead in Paradise or in "Gehenna;" and in very varied degrees of punishment and of blessedness; and even that some may be in anguish who yet hope for the Resurrection of Life; and this practically amounts to something but little distinguishable from a purgatorial fire.[1] And this view is freely admitted, and has long been admitted, by Lutheran and other Protestant divines.[2] And in views like these I see a strong confirmation of all that I said in *Eternal Hope*, and a very sensible mitigation of the horrors which are preached by popular theology.

And I find the blessedness of a similar belief in four other doctrines or opinions which bear on the question of the future life, and which, although they furnish no proof of the Romish doctrine of purgatory, do undoubtedly point inferentially to the belief of the Church that after death some change and progressive

[1] Petr. Arcudius, *De Purgatorio*, p. 52. φεύγουσι ὥσπερ τι ἀποτρόπαιον ὀνομάσαι πῦρ καθαρτήριον καὶ ὅμως τόπους διαφόρους τοῦ ᾅδου . . . καὶ οὐκ ἐπίσης αὐτοὺς κολάζεσθαι οἴονται καὶ μάλιστα τοὺς ἐπὶ ἐλπίδι ἀναστάσεως ζωῆς αἰωνίου βασανιζομένους . . . τοῦτο οὖν τὸ καθαρτηριον.

[2] See Perrone, *De Deo Creatore*, iii. 6 (Pusey's *Eirenicon*, pp. 118, 119).

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development is still possible in the condition of the dead.

One of these is the admissibility of Prayers for the Dead; the other is the article of the creed which says that Christ descended into hell; a third is the doctrine of "mitigation"; a fourth is that which has been boldly called "the bright side of hell."

I. As regards Prayers for the Dead it is unanimously admitted that they existed in the Jewish Church and were unreproved by our Lord. It is also admitted that to pray for the dead was a very ancient custom in the Christian Church. It is mentioned with approval by Tertullian in the second century,[1] and by Origen, Cyprian, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzus, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and others,[2] the common opinion being that of St. Augustine, that "The souls of the dead are relieved by the devotion of the living."[3] It is, however, quite clear that these prayers were considered by the majority, when they spoke with precision, to affect the condition of none but the *faithful dead.* This is conclusively proved by Archbishop Usher in his *Answer to a Jesuit,* and has recently been shown again in Canon Luckock's *After Death.*[4] He proves that in the earliest liturgies there is little mention of sin in these prayers for the dead, and scarcely anything in the Fathers before St. Jerome. After that time there was an increasing belief that the purification of ordinary frailties and lesser defilements after death might be furthered by the prayers of the faithful and by the due administration of the Holy Eucharist.

In some few instances, however, we are told of prayers offered up for acknowledged sinners, and not merely for the more speedy resurrection or fuller blessing of those whose eternal salvation was already

[1] *De Coron. Milit.* 3; *De Monogam.* 10.
[2] See Bishop Harold Browne, *On the Articles,* p. 494.
[3] Aug. *ad Dulcit.* [4] *After Death,* p. 117 *seq.*

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secured. No one who reads the numerous extracts which may be collected from ancient liturgies can avoid something more than a suspicion that in some way or other the prayers for the dead were supposed to benefit the souls of great sinners. "The expressions," says the Roman Catholic theologian Dieringer, "are too strong to be applied to purgatory"; and Bishop Forbes says, "Perhaps it may not be an improbable conjecture that the Church at first prayed for *all* the departed in one tenour, without discriminating; leaving it to God to hear her in whatever way He knew for each; and so that the prayers for deliverance from hell related to souls on which the particular judgment was not yet passed."[1]

And although these instances of prayers for grievous sinners are rare, must it not be admitted that, if prayer for the dead be Scriptural, it must *ex vi termini* be Scriptural to pray for those of whose eternal condition it would be impossible to be assured? On the well-known example of Judas Maccabeus, who, with his companions, seems to have prayed for those who had died in an act of sin, I will not dwell; but Origen was "one of the three of wonderful gifts of whose own salvation the Church had misgivings";[2] he was, we are told, condemned when dead, and condemned when living, as having taught heresy; yet even Cyril would, I suppose, have prayed for him, since he speaks "of offering Christ for those who have fallen asleep, even though they be sinners." Certainly St. Chrysostom in no less than three passages uses similar expressions.[3] St. Ambrose distinctly prayed for the Emperors Gratian and Valentinian;[4] could he be so very sure that they had died in a state of final salvation? Was Theodosius absolutely convinced that both his parents were saved

[1] *On the Articles*, ii. 318.
[2] *What is of Faith*, p. 11. Of these Solomon was one, and Tertullian another.
[3] Luckock, *After Death*, pp. 131-148.
[4] St. Ambr. *De Obitu Valent. ad fin.*

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when he prayed for them so earnestly at the shrine of St. Chrysostom?[1] We are told, quite truly, that we have no right to pronounce the doom of any one however sinful his death may seem to have been. May we not then pray for all,—or rather must we not, under these circumstances, pray for all who are dear to us? And would it have been permitted to pray for them if it was impossible to do them any good? Even St. Augustine thought that our prayers might at least secure for the lost a *tolerabilior damnatio*.[2] Multitudes of passages might be quoted from modern liturgies, in which the words do not easily bear any other construction than that they are a prayer that *the sins* of the dead may be forgiven. The evidence of mediæval legends—however worthless in themselves—shows that the belief in the efficacy of such prayers was widely spread. Thus St. Gregory was popularly believed by his prayers to have saved from hell the soul of the Emperor Trajan,[3] and St. Dunstan the soul of King Edwin.[4] Other legends told how Thekla, had by her prayers saved from hell Falconilla, the daughter of Tryphaena, and how the skull of a dead heathen priest informed St. Honorius that the dead felt some little consolation (παραμυθίας μικράς, John Damasc.) when he prayed for them. These legends—however idle—of course prove the popular belief. Nor was the belief merely popular. St. Augustine himself,[5] like many others, inferred from Matt. xii. 31, 32, that forgiveness for some sins might be obtained for the dead by the prayers of the living.

Once again, what is the meaning of the story told in the Acts of St. Perpetua, which some have assigned to the authorship of Tertullian? In a vision she sees her brother Dinocrates in distress and darkness, he having been guilty of some heinous fall. She prays

[1] Theodoret, *H. E.* v. 36.
[2] Aug. *Enchir. ad Laurent.* cx.
[3] Baronius, *Ann.* 604, § 44.
[4] Gul. Malmesbur. ii. 50.
[5] Aug. *De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 24.

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for him, and then sees him in light, cleansed and refreshed; and St. Augustine says that 'he had gone into the damnation of death, and was only liberated through the prayer of his sister, who was about to die for Christ.'[1] So St. Paulinus, speaking of his brother Delphinus, who seems, from what he says, to have died in sin, begs St. Amandus and others to pray for him, "that God may refresh his soul with drops of mercy. For *doubtless . . . the dew of His forgiveness also will penetrate to hell*, so that when scorched in the kindled darkness he may be refreshed with the dewy light of His pity."[2]

Nay more, even our Church "deeply convinced that the general tone of the teaching of antiquity goes beyond a mere prayer for consummation of bliss both in body and soul, and probably extends to actual forgiveness for some sins (perhaps at the foreseen prayers of the Church) and the mitigation of some penalties, has formed her Burial Service on a theory of which this doctrine is the only interpretation; that words of hope may be used of all but the excommunicate."[3] And in the light of all these beliefs and practices, am I not entitled to claim that the real doctrine of the Church on Future Retribution has never been identical with that which so many preach in her name?

II. Another doctrine which suggests inferences all tending to the possibility of purification and educational discipline being mingled with the penalty for sin beyond the grave may be found in the article of the Creed which says of Christ, that "He descended into hell."[4]

As regards the descent of Christ into hell, some glimpse of the history and gradual growth of opinions

[1] Aug. *De Anima*, i. 10. [2] Ep. xxxvi. *ad Amand.*

[3] Bishop Forbes, *On the Articles*, ii. 347.

[4] "Quam devorarat improbus Praedam refudit Tartarus | Captivitate libera Jesum sequuntur agmina."
FULBERT, *Hymn. Pasch.*

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on this article of the faith may be gained from reading the following passages, but I only touch on that part of the question which bears on my present subject. The reader who seeks further information may find it abundantly in Bishop Pearson *On the Creed.*

ST. IGNATIUS, † 107.—"He descended alone into Hades, but He rose up from it with a multitude, and He cleft the aeonian barrier, and broke down its middle wall."[1]

ST. JUSTIN MARTYR, † 167.—"And He descended to *them* (the dead) to preach to them His salvation."[2]

ST. IRENAEUS, † 202.—"Christ descended to preach even to those (who were under the earth) His advent."[3]

TERTULLIAN, † 218.—"Christ did not ascend to heaven till He descended to the lower parts of the earth, that there He might make patriarchs and prophets partakers of Himself."[4]

HIPPOLYTUS, † 257.—"Who has been manifested as King even of those under the earth—of those under the earth, because He was numbered even among the dead, preaching the Gospel to the souls of the Saints."[5]

ORIGEN, † 254.—"Jesus descended into Hades, and

[1] *κατῆλθεν εἰς ᾅδου μόνος, ἀνῆλθε δὲ μετὰ πλήθους, καὶ ἔσχισε τὸν ἀπ' αἰῶνος φραγμὸν καὶ τὸ μεσότοιχον αὐτοῦ ἔλυσε.—Ep. ad Trall.* Collections of the chief passages of the Fathers may be found in G. H. Voss, *Thes. Theol. Disp.*, and in Dietelmair, *De Descensu Christi ad Inferos*, 1760, where the subject is clearly and fully treated, and the great diversity of opinion respecting it made very evident.

[2] *καὶ κατέβη πρὸς αὐτοὺς εὐαγγελίσασθαι αὐτοῖς τὸ σωτήριον αὐτοῦ.—Dial. cum Tryph.*

[3] *c. Haer.* iv. 27.

[4] "Nec ante ascendit in sublimiora coelorum quam descendit in inferiora terrarum, ut illic Patriarchas et Prophetas compotes sui faceret."—*De Anima*, 55. See, too, *De Resur. Carnis*, 44.

[5] *καταχθονίων ὅτι καὶ ἐν νεκροῖς κατελογίσθη, εὐαγγελιζόμενος καὶ τὰς τῶν ἁγίων ψυχάς.—De Antichristo*, 26. In c. 45 of the same work he says that John the Baptist preceded Christ as His forerunner in Hades also.

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the Prophets before Him, and they proclaim beforehand the coming of Christ."[1]

"And with His soul stripped of the body He associated with souls stripped of their bodies, converting to Himself those even of them that were willing, or those who for reasons which He Himself knew, were more fitted for it."[2]

ST. CLEMENS OF ALEXANDRIA, † *circ.* 218.—"Did not the same dispensation also occur in Hades that there also all the sôuls, on hearing the proclamation, may either manifest repentance, or that their punishment was due to their unbelief?"[3]

EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA, † *circ.* 342.—"Bursting open the eternal gates of the dark abode, and opening a way of return to life for the dead there bound in chains of death."[4]

ATHANASIUS †? 373.—(The devil) "sitting by the gates sees all the fettered beings led forth by the courage of the Saviour."[5]

GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, † 389.—"Until He loosed by His blood all who groan under Tartarean chains."[6]

FIRMICIUS MATERNUS, †? 370.—"The crowd of the just was so collected by Him that the iniquity of death might no more have dominion over them."[7]

[1] Ἰησοῦς εἰς ᾅδου γέγονεν καὶ οἱ προφῆται πρὸ αὐτοῦ, καὶ προκηρύσσουσι τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὴν ἐπιδημίαν.—In 1 K. xxviii. 32.

[2] καὶ γυμνῇ σώματος γενόμενος ψυχῇ ταῖς γυμναῖς σωμάτων ὡμίλει ψυχαῖς, ἐπιστρέφων κἀκείνων τὰς βουλομένας πρὸς αὐτόν, ἢ ἅς ἐώρα, δι' οὓς ᾔδει αὐτὸς λόγους, ἐπιτηδειοτέρας.—*C. Cels.* ii. p. 85.

[3] οὐχὶ καὶ ἐν ᾅδου ἡ αὐτὴ γέγονεν οἰκονομία ἵνα κἀκεῖ πᾶσαι αἱ ψυχαὶ ἀκούσασαι τοῦ κηρύγματος, ἢ τὴν μετάνοιαν ἐνδείξωνται ἢ τὴν κόλασιν εἶναι δι' ἃν οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν.—STROM. vi. See other passages quoted *supra*, in Chap. II.

[4] τοῖς αὐτόθι νεκροῖς σειραῖς θανάτου πεπεδημένοις παλίντροπον τῆς ἐπὶ τὴν ζωὴν ἀνόδου τὴν πορείαν ποιούμενος.—*Demonstr. Evang.* iv. 12.

[5] καθήμενος παρὰ τὰς πύλας θεωρεῖ ἐξαγομένους πάντας τοὺς πεπεδημένους τῇ τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἀνδρείᾳ.—*In Pass. et Cruc. Domini.*

[6] εἰσόκε πάντας Ταρταρέων μογεόντας ὑφ' αἵματι λύσατο δεσμῶν.—*Carm.* xii.

[7] *De Error. Prof. Rel.*

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VICTORINUS, † *circ.* 303.—

"From the lowest depths
Tartarus poured forth its chiefs, and the blessed fathers
Arise."[1]

ST. AMBROSE, † 357.—"Christ . . . . bursting open the bars and gates of hell, recalled to life from the jaws of the devil . . . souls bound in sin."[2]

ST. HILARY OF POICTIERS, † *circ.* 367.—"He knows . . . that even to those who were in prison and had once been unbelieving, the exhortation was preached."[3]

EPIPHANIUS, † 403.—"To liberate the captive Adam and his fellow captive Eve from anguish, goeth her God, and Son."[4]

ST. JEROME, † 420.—"From those seats of hell no one has been freed by his own merits, but only by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"The land of the dead, which is torn asunder and emptied, when by the death of Christ the souls bound in hell are set free."[5]

SYNESIUS, † *circ.* 430.—

"And descending under Tartarus. . .
And setting free from their pains
The holy choir of souls."[6]

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[1] "A sedibus imis
Tartarus evomuit proceres, patresque beati
Consurgunt."—*De Christo, Deo et Homine.*

[2] "Christus . . . vinctas peccato animas . . . e diaboli faucibus revocavit ad vitam."—AMBR. *De Myster. Pasch.* 4.

[3] "Scit . . . etiam his qui in carcere erant, et increduli quondam fuerunt, exhortationem praedicatam fuisse."—In Ps. cxviii.

[4] Τὸν αἰχμάλωτον Ἀδάμ, καὶ τὴν συναιχμάλωτον Εὔαν τῶν ὀδυνῶν λύσαι πορεύεται ὁ Θεὸς καὶ υἱὸς αὐτῆς.—*Hom. in Sepult. Christi* (who also holds that John the Baptist heralded him in Hades).

[5] Jer. in Job, c. 36; in Hoseam. c. 13.

[6] καταβὰς δ' ὑπὸ τάρταρον
λύσας δ' ἀπὸ πημάτων
ψυχῶν ὁσίους χορούς.—*Hymn IX.*

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ST. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, † 444.—"And wandering down even to Hades, He has emptied the dark, secret, invisible treasuries."[1]

It would be useless to heap up the masses of later testimonies; but this one from Theodore of Jerusalem, which is found in the Acts of the Second Nicene Council, may suffice. He says that he believes in Christ, "Who despoiled Hades, and set free those who had been imprisoned from eternity."[2]

Many other passages might be quoted to show the prevalence of the view that Christ, by His descent into hell, saved *all* who had, up to that time, died, although St. Augustine stigmatised the view as a heresy. Indeed some went even so far as to imagine that Judas hanged himself for the express purpose of gaining the advantage of this conquest over Satan and Hades.[3]

It will be seen from these passages that the Church first grasped the meaning of Christ's descent into hell as being something more than His suffering and burial; then deduced from 1 Peter iii. 19 the belief that He preached to those spirits in prison; then that He set free the faithful souls of olden saints and patriarchs.[4] It will be seen further that a belief gradually and not unnaturally sprang up that since He preached to those "who sometime were

[1] καταφοιτήσας δὲ καὶ εἰς ᾅδου κεκένωκε θησαυροὺς σκοτεινοὺς, ἀποκρύφους, ἀοράτους.—*Glaphyr.* ii. See too *Hom. Pasch.* xi. and *Hom.* vi. σεσύληται τῶν πνευμάτων ὁ ᾅδης.

[2] τὸν ᾅδην σκυλεύσαντα καὶ τοὺς ἀπ' αἰῶνος δεσμίους ἐλευθερώσαντα.—HARDUIN, iv. 142.

[3] Zonaras, *Ep.* 56, καὶ εἰς ᾅδην κατελθεῖν ἐπὶ τῷ τυχεῖν ἐκεῖσε παρ' αὐτοῦ συγχωρήσεως.

[4] "Our Saviour Jesus Christ at His entry into hell . . . spoiled hell, and brought with Him from thence all the souls of those righteous and good men which, from the fall of Adam, died in the favour of God."—*Institution of a Christian Man.*

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disobedient," these *sinners* must have benefited by His preaching; and this conception ripened into the view first that some, and then that all, even of these sinners were set free. As early as the first century it had been inferred that, since His saints and apostles continue His work on earth, so they too preached, and by their preaching helped to deliver or to ameliorate the lot of those who pass hence into a state of punishment. If much of this doctrine rests solely on inference, the same is equally true of no small part of the details of scholastic theology, of which it cannot always be said that the inference is at least merciful, and in accordance with all which God has revealed to us respecting His infinite compassion as the God of Love. All that our Church defines respecting the descent into Hades in the Third Article is that "it is to be believed that He went down into hell." But in the Article of 1552 these words were added. "For the Body lay in the sepulchre until His resurrection; but His ghost, departing from Him (*ab Illo emissus*), was with the ghosts that were in prison or in hell (*in carcere sive in inferno*); and did preach to the same, as the place of St. Peter doth testify." These words, in Dr. Hey's opinion, were only withdrawn out of deference to the Calvinists, who held that Christ's descent into hell meant only the suffering for sin on earth;[1] but they are a far more reasonable explanation of the three passages of Scripture on which the doctrine mainly rests than either the notion of Durandus that Christ's descent was only one of efficacy and influence;[2] or that of others, that they merely refer to the burial of Christ.[3] Keble alludes to this last opinion, but

[1] Calvin, *Inst.* ii. 16, § 10. "Eam mortem pertulit quae sceleribus ab irato Deo infligitur." Beza and others maintained that He actually endured the sufferings of the Lost.

[2] Durandus in *Sent.* iii. *dist.* 22, *qu.* 3. See Strype's "Parker," iii. 18.

[3] On this "very late" opinion see Pearson *On the Creed*, p. 329.

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only to reject it, in the lines of his hymn for Easter Eve :—

"Sleepst Thou indeed, or is Thy spirit fled
At large among the dead?
Whether in Eden bowers Thy welcome voice
Wake Abraham to rejoice;
Or in some drearier scene Thine eye controls
The thronging band of souls;
That as Thy death won earth, Thine agony
Might set the shadowy world from sin and sorrow free."[1]

III. But besides the gleam of light which is thrown upon the dark future of the lost by inferences which mercifully and naturally suggest themselves from these three doctrines—the Intermediate State of preparation and purification; the permissibility of Prayers for the Dead; and the Descent of Christ into Hades—there is yet a fourth consideration of importance even more direct: I mean the belief in the possibility of some future *Mitigations* of the pains of the lost (*refrigeria*[2]), and especially of the "pain of sense," which has always been (even apart from Purgatory) permitted in the Catholic Church.

This position was maintained, with great ability and unanswerable demonstration, by Père Émery, the superior of St. Sulpice, and Grand Vicar, in his theological lectures at Lyons. Émery, who died in 1811, was a man not only of high position and of great courage, but also of profound theological learning. The Emperor Napoleon had a sincere respect for him, and in one of his conversations with him, as we are told by Cardinal Fesch, had touched on the doctrine of endless torment as a great difficulty. Émery asked if he would like to hear him read his lecture on the

[1] The doctrine is mainly built on Eph. iv. 9; 1 Pet. iii. 19; Acts ii. 26.

[2] Salvian. *Avar.* iii. 11, "guttam *refrigerii.*"

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subject. Napoleon eagerly accepted the offer, and remarked repeatedly, "*Très bien, très bien.*" It is however more to the purpose that, although the Dominican order is the most jealous of all about orthodoxy, the Dominican Sibylla at Venice took the same view, and Émery's book was admitted into the Dominican Library of the Minerva at Rome. It is still more remarkable that although Émery did not acknowledge his work during his lifetime, the Abbé Carle, in his book on the Catholic doctrine of the future (*Du Dogme catholique sur l'Enfer*, Paris, 1840), prints the dissertation of Émery *Sur la Mitigation des Peines des damnés*[1] at full length, and with the entire approval of the high authorities whom he consulted on the subject. Further than this, neither Émery's book nor the Abbé Carle's has ever been censured by the Congregation of the Index. This learned and high-minded theologian has treated the subject so wisely and fully as materially to abridge my labour on this important head, which, so far as I know, has scarcely been so much as touched upon by English theologians.

i. In *St. Augustine's* remarks on Psalm cv. (written A.D. 416), he denies any mitigation of the pains of the lost (*quis audeat dicere? . . . quis audacter dixerit?*), because Dives could not get a drop of water to cool his tongue: a view of the passage which, like so many adopted by St. Augustine, belongs to an obsolete style of exegesis; unduly presses an incidental detail of the framework of a parable; and obviously is wholly beside the mark, since Dives is not in "hell," but in Hades. What was impossible at that moment might by no means be impossible for ever. He however puts off all discussion of the subject till some other opportunity.[2] But—wavering on this subject of

[1] It was published anonymously with the *Pensées de Leibnitz*, 1804, and suppressed by the author.

[2] "Sed de hac re diligentius disserendum est."—In Ps. cv.

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Eschatology, as he did again and again—he says in his *Enchiridion*[1] that there are propitiations for those who are not very bad, and that though for the very bad there are no means of aid, yet for the moderately bad (*i.e.* for the vast majority), though they be in hell, the sacrifices of the altar were advantageous to secure "either complete remission, or at least a more endurable damnation." The last words, as Petavius and Émery both argue, show that he is here speaking of "hell," and not of purgatory. Further on, commenting upon the text, "God will not forget to pity," he says, "Let them suppose, if it pleases them, that the pains of the lost are, at certain intervals, *mitigated* . . . . so that in His anger He still does not withhold His compassions, not by ending, but by alleviating, or giving a rest amid their torments."[2] Albertus Magnus, followed by many schoolmen, would again confine this remark to purgatory, but there can be no doubt that Sixtus of Siena[3] is right in saying that Augustine ultimately leaned to the theory of "mitigation." For in his *City of God* (A.D. 426 or 427), in which we possess some of his latest thoughts, he says that if any wish to extend the expressions of the Psalms to "the torments of the impious," by holding that these pains become milder and lighter, he has, at any rate, nothing to say against it.[4]

ii. Again, often as *St. Chrysostom* speaks of "eternal woes," he uses expressions in his Third Homily on the Philippians which make both Sixtus and Petavius, as well as Émery, think that he too held the theory

[1] *Enchir.* 110, § 1. On his uncertainties, see *infra*, pp. 288-295, *supra*, p. 63.

[2] "Poenas damnatorum certis temporum intervallis existment, si hoc eis placet, aliquatenus mitigari . . . ut in ira sua non tamen contineat miserationem suam non aeterno finem dando, sed levamen adhibendo, vel interponendo cruciatibus."—*Enchir.*

[3] Sixt. Sen. *Bibl. Sanct.* v. 47. "Ab hac opinione Augustinus non omnino abhoruisse videtur."

[4] *De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 24. "Quod quidem non ideo confirmo, quia non resisto." See p. 291.

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of "mitigation." This conjecture will be greatly supported by what I shall have to say about the views of this great saint farther on.[1]

iii. That *Prudentius* held the doctrine of mitigation is certain. He writes in a celebrated passage—

> "Sunt et spiritibus saepe nocentibus
> Poenarum celebres sub Styge feriae."

iv. *Bishop Lupus* argued that just as the sun warms without enlightening the blind, so Christ, by the merit of so great a sacrifice, might lessen the pains of the self-blinded.[2]

v. *John of Damascus* incontestably believed in the doctrine of Mitigation, and thought that sinners could even be delivered from "hell" by the prayers of saints. Thus he tells how St. Thekla delivered her mother Falconilla; and Pope Gregory I. delivered the Emperor Trajan; and Macarius helped a certain Pagan priest. With these valueless legends we have, of course, no concern. What I am proving is that the opinion which the Church so fully permitted cannot be otherwise than consistent with the faith once delivered to the saints.

vi. And little as the fact is now known to those who ignorantly maintain that it is heresy to hold that the doom of "the lost" is not "necessarily" final to all who incur it, nearly every one of the great Roman Catholic theologians and the whole body of Eastern theologians—held this very view. They gave unanimous credence to the story of the deliverance of Trajan from "hell," and even invented theories to account for it. Thus *Suarez* says, "Whether any one may be delivered from Hell is a disputed point, and one which does not pertain to faith."[3] *Estius* even says that *many* might be

[1] See *infra*, pp. 271-274, and the quotation on the title page.

[2] *Bibl. Patr.* xv. 51.

[3] "An vero aliquis excipiatur res controversiae est, et quae non pertinet ad fidem."—SUAREZ, *De Peccatis*, *Disp.* vii. 3.

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mentioned who had been so delivered.[1] Even *St. Thomas of Aquinum* could not resist the cogency (to himself) of the legend about Trajan, and could only say that "Trajan had not been finally doomed to hell, but only provisionally, and that his deliverance was granted to him as an exceptional privilege."[2]

vii. The eminent commentator *Theophylact*, who was so great an admirer of St. Chrysostom's works, says on Luke xii. 5, that "even when men have died in mortal sin God can remit something, and not use His full power of casting into Gehenna."[3]

viii. Again, the author of the *Quaestiones ad Antiochum*, which is printed with the works of St. Athanasius, says that even the lost will benefit by our alms and prayers.

ix. It is a remarkable fact that the great *Pope Innocent III.*, when consulted on this very point by the Archbishop of Lyons, left it an open question (*tua discretio investiget*) whether Masses might not benefit those of the lost who were only "moderately bad." The attempt to get over this opinion —which, as Bellarmine observes, "torments many" (*multos torquere solet*)—by saying that it only refers to Purgatory, is strangely futile; for that the souls in Purgatory were benefited by prayers and alms, was not regarded by any Roman Catholic as an open question at all, but one which was absolutely settled in the affirmative from very early days.[4]

x. The *Third Council of Florence* (1438) expressly admitted that this doctrine of mitigation might be held without any blame.[5]

[1] Est. in *Sentent.* iv; *Disp.* xlvi. 241.

[2] "Alia sunt quae lege communi accidunt, et alia quae singulariter ex privilegio aliquibus conceduntur."—ST. THOM. AQ.

[3] See *supra*, p. 23, *infra*, p. 92.

[4] "Ce pape," says Emery, "supposait . . qu'on pouvait, sans blesser la foi, croire ce qu'on voulait sur cette matière."—ABBÉ CARLE, p. 406.

[5] *Mansi*, xxxi. 488.

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xi. At this Council the Greek Bishop *Mark, Metropolitan of Ephesus*, made two speeches as to the views of the Greek Church on this subject, and quoted a passage of St. Basil to prove that he held it.[1] Father Lequien in his edition of John of Damascus selects Bishop Mark as a representative theologian of the Greek Church, and Syropulus[2] in his *History of the Council of Florence* says that Bishop Mark's speech was approved by the Emperor Palaeologus, and his learned theological assessors. Leo Allatius, in his account of the Greek ecclesiastical writers, says that they defend with tenacity (*mordicus*) the merciful opinion that the lost are refreshed by the prayers of saints, and sometimes even delivered by their aid.[3] They maintain this opinion on three grounds—the pity of God; the opinions of the Fathers; and the legends about the Emperor Trajan and Theophilus.

xii. To return to the Latin Church: the famous monk *Gotteschalk* wrote to the Bishops of France in the ninth century that they should urge the people to pray expressly, not only for those in purgatory, but for the lost, that God would even a little alleviate (*mitiget et laeviget*) their pains.[4]

xiii. *Hugo Etherianus*, one of the most learned theologians of the twelfth century, wrote his treatise *On the Return of Souls from Hell*, at the request of the clergy.[5] In the thirteenth and following chapters a Christian soul in hell begs the prayers of the living, and says that even those who die in mortal sin can be assisted and even delivered. The lost soul bids

[1] The passage is in a homily attributed to Basil, which is used in the paschal office of the Greek Church, in which he prays to Christ that by His merits the pains of the lost may be alleviated.—CARLE, p. 409.

[2] Syropulus, *Hist. Conc. Florent.* Sess. v. cap. 14.

[3] "Quibus (precibus) et recreantur et aliquando etiam a poenis liberantur."—LEO ALLATIUS, *De. Libr. Eccles. Graec.* ii. 117.

[4] This appears from the answer of Amolon, Archbishop of Lyons, *Bibl. Patr.* xiv. 335.

[5] *Bibl. Patr.* xxii. It was not published till 1540.

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men pray for the lost, "that they may suffer a more endurable damnation, or gain a complete remission." Hugo, besides the usual legends, adduces that of Herman, Bishop of Capua, who delivered the soul of the Deacon Paschasius from a troop of devils.

xiv. This view of "mitigation" was held by *Peter Lombard*,[1] by *Praepositivus*,[2] by *St. Thomas Aquinas*,[3] by our great Bishop, *Robert Grostete*,[4] by *Townely*,[5] by *Gilbert, Bishop of Poictiers*, by the great Chancellor, *Jean Gerson* (probably in part author of the *Imitatio Christi*),[6] by *Pope Benedict XIV.*,[7] by *St. Bonaventura*, by the *Scotists*, and even by *Bossuet*,[8] and by *Petau*.[9]

xv. Coming down to later times, *St. Francis de Sales*, writing on Psalm lxxix. 10, quotes with approval the version of the old poet Desportes:—

> "Vous n'avez oublié la bonté de votre âme,
> Non pas même en jetant les damnés dans les flammes,
> De l'éternel en enfer; emmi [parmi] votre fureur,
> Vous n'avez su garder [empêcher] votre sainte douceur,
> De répandre les traits de sa compassion,
> Emmi ses justes coups de la punition."

xvi. *Leibnitz* argued that the pains of the lost might be constantly diminished, yet never quite removed, just as the asymptote never quite touches the circle. In this he gave more accurate expression to

[1] *Sent.* iv. *Disp.* 45. "Mediocriter malis suffragantur ad poenae mitagationem."

[2] *Summa Theol.* xiv. (not published). "Fortasse queunt viventium merita in aliquo perditorum laxare supplicia."

[3] He says on Ps. lxxvi. "Hoc intelligitur de misericordia aliquid relaxante."

[4] See Sixt. Sen. *Bibl.* vi. 48.

[5] *De Eucharistia*, ii. 8. He says that great theologians had thought "reproborum tormenta in inferis leniri posse."

[6] Gerson, in a sermon before the king, argued from the case of Dives that the damned could at least rejoice in the salvation of their living friends.—*Opp.* iv. 634.

[7] He quotes with approval a prayer, "Fusis precibus imploremus ut Ejus indulgentiâ illuc defuncti liberentur a Tartaro."

[8] See Émery, in Carle, p. 435.

[9] *De Angelis*, iii. 8.

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a notion of Gilbert, Bishop of Poictiers, who argued from the infinite divisibility of lines.[1]

xvii. Lastly, Émery attaches great importance to a remarkable pastoral issued by a holy and learned Bishop of Boulogne, Mgr. de Pressy, in 1790, in which he devotes a long passage to the refutation of all objections to the doctrine of "mitigation," and concludes by saying that, since the opinion is not contrary either to Scripture or to reason, it may serve to remove in the minds of unbelievers "the scandal of the cruelty which they attribute to the dogma of eternal pains."

It is remarkable that throughout his treatise M. Émery does not so much as once allude to the word *refrigeria*, the "refreshments" of the lost, in which some of the Fathers believed. How universally it was supposed that such "times of refreshment" were granted to the damned may be seen in the famous mediæval legend of St. Brendan, which Mr. Matthew Arnold has put into such exquisite verse. On an iceberg in the Northern Sea the saint catches sight of a miserable figure, in which he recognises the "traitor Judas out of hell." Judas cries out—

> "One moment wait, thou holy man!
> On earth my crime, my death, they knew;
> My name is under all men's ban;
> Be told them of my respite too."

Because of his one good deed—the giving of a cloak to a poor leper at Joppa—

> "Once every year, when carols wake
> On earth the Christian's night's repose,
> Arising from the sinner's lake,
> I journey to these healing snows."

The notion that the lost not merely remained impenitent in a sinful state, but went on sinning in hell is a refinement of superfluous horror left for the

[1] Leibnitz, *Théodicée*, § 92.

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pious tenderness of modern Calvinists, and absolutely alien from, nay, contradictory to, the teachings of Scripture. It is a mere figment of human inference, which makes more terrible, and not less terrible, the theory which it was invented to support.

IV. It only remains to mention yet another of the views wherewith the heart of the pitiful has striven to alleviate the frightfulness of erring fancies. It is the conception of what the late F. W. Faber calls "the bright side of hell." Cardinal Newman, in his *Dream of Gerontius*, represents the pains of purgatory as almost a bliss :—

> "In the willing agony
> He plunges and is blest."

The Bishop of Belley, a friend of St. Francis de Sales, applies the same conception even to hell. He imagines the damned, not as a modern Catechism describes them, "cursing, roaring, and blaspheming God," but joining in unanimous hymns in honour of that Mercy in consequence of which they are not consumed. The notion is probably founded on such texts as Philippians ii. 10. I do not know whether Mr. E. H. Bickersteth ever read the views of this Roman Catholic Bishop, but he, too, in his striking poem, "Yesterday, To-day, and For Ever," represents "hell" as almost a holy, and therefore almost a happy place. Some passages in the *De Bono Mortis* of St. Ambrose might lead us to think that he also leaned to the same view. Throughout his cautious language we trace the opinion that even for sinners the world beyond the grave is less painful than the retribution which falls on them in their earthly life.

No one, I think, can read this chapter without arriving at the conclusion that views far more

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tolerable, infinitely less repulsive than those of current sermons—views analogous to or identical with my own—have in all ages been not only permissible, but common in the Church. In the doctrine of an Intermediate State with its possible purgational and probatory fire; in the permitted practice of prayer for the Dead; in the revealed fact of Christ's Descent into Hades; in the belief that Mitigations would be granted to the lost; finally, in a more spiritual and less abhorrent conception of the condition of lost souls, the Catholic Church has granted comfort and hope to those who find a stumbling-block in the remorselessness of human fancies.

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CHAPTER IV.

WAS THERE NOT A CAUSE?

ὁ πρὸς ἀληθείαν ᾠδὴς ὁ τοῦ μοχθηροῦ βίος ἐστὶν, ὁ ἀλάστωρ, καὶ παλαμναῖος, καὶ πάσαις ἄραις ἔνοχος.—PHILO.

"Patiturque suos mens conscia manes."—AUSON.

"Pure love is the only eternal fire."—MAD. DE LA MOTTE GUYON.

I WILL now proceed to take in succession the four points which I challenged as accretions to the Scriptural and Catholic doctrine of future retribution. It is admitted by Dr. Pusey, and by all of those who have recently written and spoken on the subject with any knowledge or authority, that as to three of these I was perfectly right; that three of these *are* accretions; that they are not matters of faith. They have been repeated chiefly by the least competent of theologians and preachers with that arrogant tone of infallibility which, in all ages, theologians and preachers have been too much tempted to adopt;—but they are matters of mere opinion—of opinion not binding upon any one; of opinion not more intrinsically authoritative than many other opinions of writers who have shown themselves eminently fallible, and often wholly in the wrong.

First, then, I denied any necessary validity to the opinion that the fire of hell is corporeal, that its

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tortures are physical tortures. I said that I rejected the belief in the "physical torments, the material agonies, the *sapiens ignis* of eternal punishment." The words *sapiens ignis* were quoted from Minucius Felix, who, in a revolting passage in which many have followed him, spoke of the fire of hell as a conscious fire which at once "burns and renews, feeds on and nourishes the limbs." [1]

Dr. Pusey at once and frankly concedes my point. Whatever may be his own personal belief, he says, respecting bodily torments, that "neither the Church nor any portion of it has so laid down any doctrine in regard to them as to make the acceptance of them an integral part of the doctrine itself"; and again, "with regard to the nature of the sufferings, nothing is matter of faith." He quotes passages to this effect from St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. John Damascene, and Theophylact (A.D. 1077). He therefore not only admits all I asked for, but supports it. I was fully aware when I wrote that this notion of a bodily hell was not any part of the Catholic faith. Petavius has collected the passages of the Fathers which speak of the pains of future punishment as being mental, and for the sake of those readers who may like to read them in the original, I will record them in the note.[2] "As to the place, manner, and kind of these sufferings," says Alban Butler, "nothing has been defined by the Church; and all who except against this doctrine on account of the circumstance of a material fire, quarrel about

[1] Minuc. Felix, *Octav.* 35.

[2] Petavius (*De Angelis, Theol. Dogma*, iii. v. 8; *Opp.* v. p. 103, ed. Antw.) has adduced the following among others: *οὐχ ὑλικὸν (τὸ πῦρ) οἷον τὸ παρ' ἡμῖν· ἀλλ' οἷον εἰδείη ὁ Θεός.*—JOHN DAMASC. *Σκώληξ δὲ καὶ πῦρ κολάζοντα τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἡ συνείδησίς ἐστιν ἑκάστου καὶ ἡ μνήμη τῶν πραχθέντων ἐν τῷ βίῳ τουτῷ αἰσχρῶν.*—THEOPHYL. "Tormenta quae Scriptura sancta peccatoribus comminatur, non ponit (Origenes) in suppliciis sed in conscientia peccatorum."—JER. *Ep. lix. ad Aditum*; cf. Apol. ii. *in Rufinum.* "Neque corporalium stridor aliquis dentium, neque ignis aliquis perpetuus flammarum corporalium,

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a mere scholastic question, in which a person is at liberty to choose either side." [1] But if this be so, some perhaps may say that it was needless for me to speak. If theologians, alike ancient and modern, have denied that any one need believe in a bodily hell; if, as Alethinus says in his notes on Petavius, it is wiser to leave the question an open one, because it is not to be decided from Scripture, and there is no apostolic tradition or new revelation on the subject; if, as Petavius frankly admits, the Church has never laid down any decree on the subject in any Council or Synod—why was it necessary for me to plead so strongly that Christians should be emancipated from such teaching?

1. For two reasons. First, because, as I have shown, this form of the doctrine, beyond all others, is so revolting and abhorrent to the human mind that the insistence in a belief on it is the main cause of the scepticism of thousands. It is a huge, a horrible, and a needless stumbling-block in the path of Christianity. It scandalises Christ's little ones. It offends the childhood of the world. It repels and overthrows those instincts of the human heart which are sweetest and most divine. It has arisen solely from the abuse, exaggeration, and misinterpretation of metaphors; and has been founded upon the exposition of all parts alike of the Bible by those who, from stereotyped prejudices, or from the want of literary training, and especially from their complete ignorance of the modes of Eastern expression, refuse to weigh the meanings of words, or to interpret language by the ordinary laws of historic criticism. Thousands of

neque vermis est corporalis, sed . . . si quis non decoquat peccata sua . . . igne aduretur proprio et suis vermibus consumetur."—AMBROSE, in Luc. xiv. So too Greg. Nyss. *De Anima*, p. 662; Macarius, *Hom.* i. *De Vis. Ezech.* § 51. (On the other side are Basil, Jerome, Lactantius, Isidore.) So too Metrophanes Tritopulus, *Confess.* 20, and see *Acts of Council of Florence* (Harduin, ix. 19).

[1] *Lives of the Saints*, Nov. 2.

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Western teachers have first taken metaphors literally, and then have forced them into the most extravagant inferences. I conceive that I have, by God's blessing, been enabled to render some service to the Church by helping many to see that, though they may believe in a material "hell" if they will, they have no right to enforce such a belief on others, because the Church does not require it, and in teaching it they are teaching for doctrine the inferences and interpretations of fallible men.

2. But secondly, it was my duty to repudiate any necessity for believing in this material fire, because although it is, confessedly, not a matter of faith, it yet has been the commonest opinion of Christians; and because it has been taught for ages, and is still taught as though it were a certain truth. In other words, men have fiercely declared that we must, at the peril of our salvation, understand literally that which is obviously metaphorical.[1]

To prove the first point I need add nothing to the testimonies which I have quoted from those who have admitted that it is this form of the doctrine which, more than any other, has made them sceptics or infidels.[2] I need only appeal further to the experience of all who have mingled in the society of literary and scientific men, and who are aware that it is not the doctrine of a future punishment for sin, but the doctrine of *endless bodily torments*, which has had the chief influence in driving many of them to the rejection of Christianity.

To prove the second point it might perhaps be sufficient to quote Dr. Pusey's own admission (p. 23) that the fire of hell has been understood to be material fire "almost universally by Christians." Petavius says "that the fire of hell, in which they are tormented, is corporeal and material,

[1] "Inter Latinos certissimum est ignem esse corporeum."—FABER, *Disput.* ii. 453. [2] See *Eternal Hope*, Exc. v., and *infra*, p. 120.

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all living Theologians, nay more, all Christians, are agreed"[1]; and he adds that, though the Church has never enjoined that doctrine, there were some who asserted that it was a matter of faith.

It is clear therefore that I was by no means fighting with shadows; and, however painful, it is positively necessary to show this once more. It is necessary once more to show that *there was just cause* openly to repudiate those hideous pictures which are due to the unlicensed revelling of human imagination, and not to the Word of God. Against the pain, even the eternal pain, of loss—against the certain truth that we shall receive according to our works—against Christ's revelation that there will, in the life to come, be degrees of punishment, light or heavy, in proportion to the degrees of guilt—that these punishments will come by the working of natural laws, the penalty being the natural result of the sin, not the arbitrary infliction of external agony—that a soul may possibly, even for ever, by its own act and its own will, shut itself out from the presence of God, and be unreclaimed even by the bitter taste of the fruit of its own doings;—these are doctrines neither unjust nor unmerciful, nor is there anything in them which revolts and maddens the conscience and the instincts of mankind. And these alone are the doctrines of Scripture, though they are often expressed in the metaphors of which all languages—and pre-eminently the literatures and languages of Semitic nations—are full.

But that souls are to be plunged into a material fire, miraculously created or kept aflame, and to be

[1] "Ceterum uti corporeum, et materia constantem esse inferorum ignem quo utique illi torquentur, Theologi hodie omnes, immo et Christiani consentiunt, ita nullo Ecclesiae decreto adhuc obsignatum videtur ut recte Vasquezius observat: neque enim ullâ in synodo sancitum illud est; etsi nonnulli rem esse fidei pronuntiant."—*De Angelis*, iii. v. 7. This was the opinion in his day, but now the German Catholic Klee, in his *Dogmatik* (ii. 429), says of the fire of purgatory that "Ignorance only or malice (to make room for irony) can think of common fire."

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tormented with excruciating physical pangs during billions of ages for every second of sin, while saints and angels rejoice at their sufferings—these are the assertions which I wish to hear authoritatively repudiated, and which I myself repudiate with abhorrence. At present they are half asserted and half believed by some; and multitudes, especially of the poor and ignorant, who neither assert nor believe them, yet suppose that they are a part of the doctrines of the Church, and in consequence look with incredulity on many other truths which are indeed matters of Christian Faith.

It has been said of late that these pictures and descriptions come only from a few writers, and those only the most passionate and the most vulgar. It has been said—and in this I heartily agree—that the doctrine of the Church ought not to be judged by pulpit diatribes. It has been said that to quote them is only to "disfigure my pages." That they "disfigure my pages" no one can feel more than I do; for some of them fill me with shame and horror. Many times I have considered whether I might not, consistently with duty, exclude them, for to quote them is a real self-sacrifice. But it is painfully necessary to show *what it is that men claiming all the infallibility of authorised teachers* have taught as revelations of God. It is not true that few only have propounded such teachings. Such passages may be adduced from thousands of writers of every class, both Romanist and Protestant, both Anglican and Nonconformist, and in every age from the third century to the nineteenth. It is right that once more, and I hope *finally*, specimens of them should be presented as warnings against a style of appeal so fatally unwarranted. I will not quote again the famous and horrible passage of Tertullian, but I will ask the reader to meditate over the following excerpts, and to remember that they are specimens of the teaching which, throughout

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long and dreary centuries, has afflicted Christian souls. It is now admitted that I was right in challenging them; that they are *not* parts of the Christian Faith. But if so, was it not a rash and an evil thing that for centuries they should have been taught as though they were?[1]

That such passages are scarcely to be found in any of the earlier Fathers is quite true, and is a significant and valuable fact. They confined themselves almost exclusively to vague and general metaphors. They did not dream, as a rule, of giving reins to the imagination in describing the torments of the damned. Even in the fierce Tertullian such a description is very exceptional. Take however these passages from one or two of the Fathers:—

ST. CYPRIAN, † 258.—"The wretched bodies of the condemned shall simmer and blaze in those living fires."

MINUCIUS FELIX, fl. 230.—"Nor to these torments will there be any measure or termination. There the sentient fire burns limbs and renews them, feeds on them and nourishes them."—*Octav.* xxxv.[2]

ST. AUGUSTINE, † 430.—"That fire is more deadly than any which man can suffer in this life."

ST. CAESARIUS OF ARLES, † 542.—Speaking even of Purgatory, he writes of it in these terms:—"A person may say I am not much concerned how long I stay in purgatory, provided I may come to

[1] "We are no longer compelled to conceive of a God possessing two different natures—on earth tender and beneficent, even repaying man's ingratitude and wickedness by His mercies, but beyond the tomb unmoved by the endless torture and excruciating pain of His enemies. We read with horror the stories of the Inquisition,—of the Emperor Montezuma broiled on a gridiron over a slow fire,—of the men tortured and driven mad by drops of water falling day and night upon their foreheads; but what are these agonies of a few days or hours, hideous and revolting as they are, in comparison with a scorching fire, which, after millions of ages, shall only have begun its work?"—DR. ERNEST PETAVEL, *The Struggle for Eternal Life*, p. 47.

[2] On this πῦρ σωφρονοῦν see Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* p. 35; Jer. in Dan. iii.; Tert. *Adv. Gnost.* 3; Paulin. *Ep. ad Sever.* 9. See p. 455.

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eternal life. Let no one reason thus. Purgatory fire will be more dreadful than whatever torments can be seen, imagined, or endured in this world. He who is afraid now to put his finger into the fire, does he not fear lest he be then all buried in torments for a long time?"—*Hom.* i. p. 5.

More passages from the Fathers might be added, but as might have been expected, it is in later ages —in ages when it was firmly believed that volcanoes were the vent-mouths of Hell, and their sound the roaring of the damned—that these descriptions and allusions become more common, until indeed they constituted the main cause of that ghastly terror which prevailed among the ignorant masses in the Mediæval Church. They date mainly from the dialogues of Gregory the Great at the close of the sixth century.

VENERABLE BEDE, † 735, *H. E.* iii. 19. v. 22.

VISION OF TUNDALE, † 1149.—"On lit dans la vision de Tundale. E per tolz lors membres autres yssian bestias serpenticos que avaient caps ardens et bex agusatz de fer," &c.—MAURY, *Legendes du Moyen Age*, p. 152.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, † 1274.—"The same fire" (which he decides to be material) "torments the damned in hell and the just in purgatory. . . . The least pain in purgatory exceeds the greatest in this life."—*Summa Theol. Suppl. qu.* 100, *act.* 2, *n.* 3.

[I might add very many such passages, *e.g.*, from the visions of Enus and Thurcal in Matthew Paris.]

ST. BONAVENTURA, † 1274.—"One damned soul, if he came into the world, would suffice to infect the entire of it."

FRAY LUIS DE GRANADA, † 1588.—"There will the condemned in cruel rage and despair turn their fury against God and themselves, gnawing their flesh with their mouth, breaking their teeth with gnashing, furiously tearing themselves with their nails, and

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everlastingly blaspheming against the judge. . . . Oh wretched tongues that will speak no word save blasphemy! Oh miserable ears that will hear no sound but groans! Oh unhappy eyes that will see nothing but agonies! Oh tortured bodies that will have no refreshment but flames. . . . We are terrified when we hear of executioners—scourging men, disjointing them, dismembering, tearing them in pieces, burning them with plates of red-hot metal. But these things are but a jest, a shadow compared with the torments of the next life."—*Sermons*, i. 72. (Translated by Rev. Orby Shipley.)

SIR THOMAS MORE, † 1535.—(Speaking only of Purgatory.)—"If ye pity the blind, there is none so blind as we, which are here in the dark save for sights unpleasant and loathsome. If ye pity the lame, there is none so lame as we, that can neither creep one foot out of the fire, nor have one hand at liberty to defend our face from the flame. Finally, if ye pity any man in pain, never knew ye pain comparable to ours, whose fire as far passeth in heat all other fires that ever burned on earth as the hottest of all that passed a feigned fire painted on a wall. If ever ye lay sick, bethink you then what a long night we sely souls endure that lie sleepless, restless, burning and broiling in the dark fire one long night or many years together. You walk peradventure and totter in sickness; we lie bound to brands, and cannot lift up our heads. . . . Your keepers do you great ease; our keepers are such as God keep you from—cruel, doomed spirites, odious, envious, and hateful, despiteous enemies and dispiteful tormentors, and their company more terrible and grievous to be in than is the pain itself; and the intolerable torment that they do us, wherewith from top to toe they cease not continually to tear us."—*Supplication of Souls.*

CALVIN, † 1564.—"For ever harassed by a dreadful tempest, they shall feel themselves torn asunder by an

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angry God, and broken by the weight of His hand, and transfixed and penetrated by mortal stings, terrified by the thunderbolt of God. So that to sink into any gulf would be more tolerable than to stand for a moment in these terrors."

ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA, † 1548.—"Let us fancy we see hell, and imagine what is worst to behold —a horrible cavern full of black flames. Sulphur, devils, dragons, fire, swords, arrows, and innumerable damned who roar in despair. Imagine the worst you can, and then say, 'All this is nothing compared to hell.' . . . In that voracious subterranean cavern all the filth of the world is collected and inclosed, without exhalation or air, which must produce a most fœtid pestilence. . . . The sight is tormented by frightful devils; a holy religious saw at death two so monstrous and ugly devils, that he cried out that rather than see them again he would walk till the day of judgment on fire of sulphur and melted metal."—*Spiritual Exercises, Medit.* xii. (This is one of the commonest books of Roman Catholic devotion.)

JEREMY TAYLOR, † 1667.—"This temporal fire is but a painted fire in respect of that penetrating and real fire in hell."

NIEREMBERG, † 1658.—"We are amazed at the inhumanity of Phalaris, who roasted men in his brazen bull; this was joy in respect of the fire of hell, which penetrates the very entrails without consuming them."—*Pains of Hell.*[1]

CATECHISMUS ROMANUS.—Hell is described as "Teterrimus et obscurissimus carcer, ubi perpetuo et inextinguibli igne damnatorum animae simul cum immundis spiritibus torquentur."

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, † 1622.—"Represent to

[1] This is a passage from *Contemplations of the State of Man*, often attributed to Jeremy Taylor (as by Mr. Alger, p. 514, and Mr. Lecky, *European Morals*, ii. 239), but proved by Archdeacon Churton to be a compilation from Nieremberg, a Spanish Jesuit.

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yourself a dark city all burning and stinking with fire and brimstone. The damned are in the depth of hell within this woful city, where they suffer unspeakable torments in all their senses and members. Consider above all the eternity of their pains, which above all things makes hell intolerable."—*Garden of the Soul.*

BARROW, † 1677.—"Our bodies will be afflicted continually by a sulphureous flame, piercing the inmost sinews."

JOHN BUNYAN, † 1688.—"Their bodies will be raised from the dead as vessels for the soul—vessels of wrath. The soul will breathe hell-fire, and smoke and coal will seem to hang upon its burning lips, yea the face, eyes, and ears will seem to be chimneys and vents for the flame, and the smoke of the burning, which God, by His breath, hath kindled therein, and upon, them, which will be held one in another, to the great torment and distress of each other."—*Works*, ii. 136.

BAXTER, † 1691.—"Is it an intolerable thing to burn part of thy body by holding it in the fire? What then will it be to suffer ten thousand times more for ever in hell?"—*Saints' Rest.*

SOUTH, † 1716.—"Every lash which God then gives the sinner shall be with a scorpion; every pain which He inflicts shall be more eager than appetite, more cruel than revenge; every faculty both of soul and body shall have its distinct property, and peculiar torment applied to it, and be directly struck there where it has the quickest, the sharpest, and the tenderest sense of any painful impression. . . . But I shall use no other argument to evince the greatness of their torment but only this, that the devil shall be the instrument of their execution. And surely a mortal enemy will be a dreadful executioner; and the punishment which an infinite justice inflicts by the hands of implacable malice must needs be intolerable."—*Sermons*, vii. 143.

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THOMAS BOSTON, † 1732.—"God will hold sinners with one hand over the pit of hell, while He torments them with the other."—*Fourfold State.*

YOUNG, † 1765.—

"How bright my prospect shines! how glorious thine!
A trembling world and a devouring God!
Earth but the shambles of Omnipotence!"

JONATHAN EDWARDS, † 1758.—"Here all judges have a mixture of mercy, but the wrath of God will be poured out upon the wicked without mixture. Imagine yourself to be cast into a fiery oven . . . and imagine also that your body were to lie there for a quarter of an hour, full of fire, as full within and without as a bright coal fire, all the while full of quick sense: what horror would you feel at the entrance of such a furnace? Oh! then how would your heart sink if you knew that after millions and millions of ages your torment would be no nearer to an end than ever it was. But your torment in hell will be immensely greater than this illustration represents."—*Works*, vol. iii. 260.

"The pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive the wicked: the flames do now rage and glow. The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much in the same way as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect, abhors you and is dreadfully provoked. . . . He will trample them beneath His feet with inexpressible fierceness; He will crush their blood out, and will make it fly, so that it will sprinkle His garment and stain all His raiment."—*Works*, vii. 499.

"You cannot stand before an infuriated tiger even; what then will you do when God rushes against you in all His wrath?"—*Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.*[1]

[1] Let it not be said that religious teachers have long repented of unconscious blasphemies like these, for this very sermon has been lately printed and circulated as a tract, to the delight of all who love to watch the spread of infidelity.

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ALBAN BUTLER, † 1773.—"Do we think that God can find torments in nature sufficient to satisfy His provoked vengeance? No, no; He creates new instruments more violent, pains utterly inconceivable to us. A soul for one venial sin shall suffer more than all the pains of distemper, the most violent colics, gout, and stone joined in complication,—more than all the most cruel torments undergone by malefactors, or invented by the most barbarous tyrants,—more than all the tortures of the martyrs summed up together. This is the idea which the Fathers give us [even?] of Purgatory. And how long souls may have to suffer there we know not."—*Lives of the Saints*, November 2.

JOHN WHITAKER, † 1783.—"The bodies of the damned will all be salted with fire, so tempered and prepared as to burn the more fiercely, and yet never consume."—*Sermon on Death, Judgment, and Eternity.*

JOHN WESLEY, † 1791.—"Is it not common to say to a child, 'Put your finger in that candle, can you bear it even for one minute?' How then will you bear Hell-fire? Surely it would be torment enough to have the flesh burnt off from only one finger; what then will it be to have the whole body plunged into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone?"—*Sermon* 73.

DEAN OF GLOUCESTER.—"There is the cup of trembling and of wrath. Your hands must take it, your mouth must drink it. But you can never drain it. There is no last drop. Infinite vengeance ever fills it to the brim. Eternal wrath is ever bringing more. What is the curse? *It is the endless accumulation of all the miseries which God's resources can command* and God's power can inflict. It is the fiery torrent from the lake of fire. It is pain which cannot be keener, despair which cannot be blacker, and anguish which cannot be more bitter. It is eternity in the oneness of all torment."—*Christ is all!*

BISHOP OXENDEN—LATE METROPOLITAN OF

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CANADA.—"For ever! torments for ever! lost for ever! it would be difficult to measure the waters of the sea; but it is impossible to reckon the ages of a boundless eternity. After millions of years it will only be begun. God's wrath in hell will be always 'wrath to come.' Few are so tossed in this world but they have some rest. There are few tempests without some lull between the storm. But there is no pause in that storm which falls upon the inhabitants of hell."—*Great Truths.*

DR. GARDINER SPRING.—"When the omnipotent and angry God, who has access to all the avenues of distress in the corporeal frame, and all the inlets to agony in the intellectual constitution, undertakes to punish, He will convince the universe that He does not gird Himself for the work of retribution in vain."

REV. C. H. SPURGEON.—"When thou diest thy soul will be tormented alone; that will be a hell for it: but at the day of judgment thy body will join thy soul, and then thou wilt have twin-hells, thy soul sweating drops of blood, and thy body suffused with agony. In fire exactly like that which we have on earth thy body will lie, asbestos-like, for ever unconsumed, all thy veins roads for the feet of Pain to travel on, every nerve a string on which the Devil shall for ever play his diabolical tune of hell's unutterable lament!"—*Sermon on the Resurrection of the Dead.*

BONHOUR.—"These unhappy children of wrath not only suffer during eternity, but they suffer eternity during each moment of their existence. Eternity is engraven on the flames which torment them. . . . . O tormenting thought! O miserable condition! to burn for ever! to weep for ever! to rage for ever!"—*Meditations*, translated for English Roman Catholics.

CATECHISM OF THE WESLEYAN METHODISTS.—

"What sort of a place is hell?

"Hell is a dark and bottomless pit full of fire and brimstone.

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"How will the wicked be punished there?

"The wicked will be punished in hell by having their bodies tormented with fire, and their souls by a sense of the wrath of God.

"How long will their torments last?

"The torments of hell will last for ever and ever."

KEBLE.—

"Salted with fire, they seem to show
How spirits lost in endless woe
May undecaying live.[1]
Oh, sickening thought! yet hold it fast."
The Christian Year.

JOHN FOSTER, † 1843.—"It is infinitely beyond the highest archangel's faculty to apprehend a thousandth part of the horror of the doom to eternal damnation."[2]

But it is when these awful and horrible conceptions have been actually painted and designed,—when the loathly agonies of Dante's *Inferno* have been illustrated by the sculptor's chisel or the artist's brush,—when the sluggish imagination of men and women has been goaded well-nigh to religious monomania

[1] It is needless to say that the allusion is to Mark ix. 49, and that this mysterious passage, in which the true reading seems to be almost irrecoverable, may have a very different meaning. It may indicate that the fire, like salt, is meant to preserve and purify; and if so, the expression points to a cleansing discipline, a baptism of fire. "Salt," our Lord adds, "is good." Would He have attached such an epithet to so horrible a fancy as the *sapiens ignis* of Tertullian and Lactantius, which Keble here reproduces and truly calls "sickening"? See *infra*, p. 455.

[2] And this fact made this eminent and holy man say, with all reverence, that he was *unable* to reconcile such views with the divine goodness. I read with pleasure in the *Record* newspaper (October 20, 1880), that, "in regard to the pictures of physical horror which many morbid imaginations have delighted to draw of the world of torment, going far even beyond the terrible words of our Lord Himself, and indulging in individual pictures of agony to which the Bible gives no authority, and on which no human mind has, in its agony, any right to dwell, the answer given [by Dr. Pusey] is sound and useful."

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by paintings like that of Orcagna, by bas-reliefs like those on the doors of mediæval abbeys, by such illuminations as those in the missals of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, by woodcuts of such abhorrent atrocity as those in the *De Inferno* of Antonio Rusca, the *Infernus carcer* of Drexelius, the *Inferno aperto* of Pinamonti,—it is then that these wanton excesses of the imagination assume the aspect of a deadly blasphemy against Him whose name is Love. The woodcuts of Pinamonti are before me. Even to look at them seems to leave on a mind filled with faith in God's Fatherhood the effect of a sin which needs an immediate lustration. Certainly after seeing them we can scarcely refrain from the question which one has asked, "What crimes of men can merit the endless tortures here set forth except the crime of conceiving such tortures, and ascribing the malice of their infliction to an all-wise and holy God?" To overthrow a belief in such horrors and such blasphemies is to overthrow a belief which is the worst enemy of the Faith, and which is the immediate parent of atheism, of wretchlessness, and of despair.

The date of Pinamonti's book is 1688. It might have been hoped that it was no longer the custom now, as it was in the middle ages, "to stain the imagination of children by ghastly pictures of future misery, to imprint upon the virgin mind atrocious images."[1] But alas, it is but quite recently that Father Furniss has written and Messrs. Duffy have published, such ghastly tracts as "The Sight of Hell," "The Terrible Judgment and The Bad Child," "The Book of the Dying," &c., and these books are published by authority. What then is still the *permitted* teaching of Roman Catholic priests? I hardly like to copy, even by way of specimen, such revolting horrors,—horrors which I believe must be as revolting to the love of God as to all that is loving,

[1] Lecky, *European Morals*, ii. 237.

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merciful, and tender in the soul of man. Let one or two very brief passages out of many pages suffice.

"When a child commits a mortal sin *its* soul is not thrown into a den of lions, but it is thrown into a den of devils. These devils are a million times more cruel and frightful than lions, and tigers, and serpents, and adders, and scorpions, and toads, and spiders, and all kinds of venomous and stinging creatures."

A child is condemned to hell. "It sees thousands and millions [of devils] on every side coming round it. . . . . On they come more swiftly than the wind, like hungry dogs would come to a bone. . . . . Now the foremost ranks of the devils are near at hand, close to the child. They are hissing at it, spitting fire and venom upon it. They stretch out their great claws of red-hot fire to get hold of the child."

If these be set down as the coarse ravings of a vulgar imagination, we are met by the two sad and startling words, that they are all taught to children, and disseminated among children, *permissu superiorum.* And the sermons of Jonathan Edwards, which put the same fancies into words, are still reprinted and sold as cheap tracts in England and America. And to show that I have not misrepresented the ordinary views need I go further than the teachings of JOHN WESLEY, of which I have already quoted one specimen, and which still form the standard of the Wesleyan Methodists? In Sermon 15 he says that the wicked "will gnaw their tongues for anguish and pain; they will curse God and look upwards. There the dogs of hell, pride, malice, revenge, rage, horror, despair, continually devour them." And again, "Consider that all these torments of body and soul are without intermission. Be their suffering ever so extreme, be their pain ever so intense, there is *no possibility of their fainting away, no, not for one*

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moment. . . . They are all eye, all ear, all sense. Every instant of their duration it may be said of their whole frame that they are

> 'Trembling alive all o'er,
> And smart and agonise at every pore.'

And of this duration there is no end. . . . Neither the pain of body nor of soul is any nearer an end than it was millions of ages ago." [1] And similar views of Hell are in the Catechism which is taught to young children.

But if these be the teachings which are common to this day, and if the Church has never and nowhere

[1] It was perhaps a consequence of having to sign these standards that of the seventeen authors—chiefly eminent divines—who reviewed my *Eternal Hope* in the *Contemporary Review* (1878), almost the only two who even approximately held to the popular view were two Wesleyans. But signs are not wanting that some Wesleyan ministers are beginning to groan under the yoke. It was on this ground that the Rev. W. Impey, Chairman and Superintendent of the Graham's Town District, South Africa, and for forty uninterrupted years a missionary in their connexion, was obliged to leave them in 1878. I do not believe that one-twentieth part of our English clergy could honestly say they accept the teaching of these passages which I have quoted. There is not one single word which resembles them in all our Thirty-nine Articles, and I feel convinced from Wesley's own reasonings on other subjects that he would have given up these views had he been living now. For (1) he, like Paley, believed in numberless degrees of future rewards and punishments, which went far to remove the sharp distinction between "lost" and "saved" (see Hunt, *Rel. Thought in England*, iii. 291). (2) He rejected Calvinism on grounds of *à priori* morality, saying that "if such a doctrine could be found in Scripture it would be a sure proof that we had mistaken the meaning of Scripture." (3) He argued that you could not expound the doctrine of some texts, "more or fewer, it matters not," which were "contrary to the whole scope and tenor of Scripture." "Whatever that Scripture proves," he said, "it can never prove this. *Whatever its true meaning, this can not be its true meaning.* Do you ask "what is its true meaning then?' If I say, 'I know not,' you have gained nothing, for there are many Scriptures, the true sense whereof neither you nor I shall know till death is swallowed up in victory. But this I know, *better it were to say it had no sense at all than to say it had such a sense as this.* . . . Let it mean what it will, it cannot mean that the Judge of all the world is unjust. *No Scripture can mean that God is not Love*, or that His mercy is not over all His works."

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required an acceptance of such teachings, I ask, Are they a part of the Christian religion, or are they not? And if they are not, that answer should be very clearly and authoritatively given. Respecting what I said, therefore, in repudiation of such accretions to the doctrine of future judgment, I ask, Was there not a cause? And I submit that such passages, and myriads more, are to be utterly and unsparingly reprobated; that, however innocently intended, they are instances of a use of the imagination which nothing in Scripture sanctions; that they are teachings which hinder the cause of Christianity; which invest with the sanctity of doctrine the dreams of men; which needlessly agonise the hearts of the compassionate and merciful; which have no higher warrant than a total misappreciation of Oriental phraseology accepted in a sense which was never intended. I submit further that such teaching is worse than ineffectual to further the cause of God by waking the terrors of those whom it should most affect. For they disbelieve it, and, in consequence, reject with it that Scriptural doctrine of just retribution which God intended as one of His provisions against the fascination of seductive sins.

And, unauthorised as these descriptions of hell-torments certainly are,—false as I believe most of them to be,—have they done no harm to humanity?

To me it seems that they have done deadly harm.

1. In the first place they have made it very difficult for multitudes to accept any part of a religion which comes to them enveloped in such a lurid glare. They have raised in many faithful minds an almost insuperable difficulty in accepting the real revelation as to the world beyond the grave. They have created the perfect fear which casts out all love. "The incredibility of this doctrine," says the author of the *Dissertation on Future Punishment* printed with the Sermons of Barrow, "hath made some persons

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desperately doubt the whole truth of that religion whereof this is supposed to be a fundamental article; which shows it to be a great scandal to human reason."[1]

2. Again, they have made good men despair of humanity, despair of life. God said to man, "Be fruitful and multiply"; but if these doctrines be true, they make this the most cruel of all commands,[2] and the animals are transcendently happier, and have a lot to be unspeakably envied by millions of mankind. Bunyan may well say, "I blessed the condition of the dog or toad, because they had no soul to perish under the everlasting weight of hell." "I fancy," said the pious and able Henry Rogers, "I should not grieve if the whole race of mankind died in its fourth year. As far as we can see, I do not know that it would be a thing much to be lamented." Thus, the belief in these false representations has driven holy Christian men to conclusions differing but little from those of the most advanced and infidel materialism, which declares the existence of mankind to be a miserable mistake. It makes a Christian apologist admit with a sigh that he can but faintly oppose even the most despairing and blasphemous of the conclusions of a Schopenhauer.

3. Again, they have had a most hardening effect upon the souls of men, making many of them ready to rejoice in the anguish and ruin of their fellow

[1] "No one who even dips into current literature can help perceiving that this is one of the main causes of the alienation from Christianity of the educated mind."—*Church Quarterly Review.*

[2] "O voice once heard
Delightfully, Increase and multiply!
Now death to hear! for what can we increase
Or multiply but woe, crime, penury?"
MILTON, *Paradise Lost.*

And Young sings—

"Father of mercies, why from silent earth
Didst Thou awake and curse me into birth?
Call into being a reverse of Thee,
And animate a clod with misery?"

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men. It is still a common thing for men hardened by the spirit of theological hatred to speak with complacency of the future retribution of those who differ from them. I have traced this feeling in not a few letters and pamphlets and religious newspapers. Grey-headed clergymen have declared in the pulpit that they feel it right deliberately to cherish a feeling of resentment and indignation against those who have been led to place a deeper trust than they themselves have done in the endless Love of God. Not long ago the Bishop of St. Andrews wrote a letter to the *Courant* on the question of war. Next day he received the following post-card: "Your letter . . . is quite a scandal. . . . *Why you make Christian people rejoice that there is in God's providence a place of retribution reserved for workers of evil like you.*" That "horrible caricature of the Gospel" by the preacher whom Dr. Guthrie heard declare "that he had a bad opinion of those who did not rejoice that God's enemies were destroyed without remedy," is by no means extinct or even rare. It was once a commonplace of theology that "the joys of the blessed were to be deepened and sharpened by constant contrast with the sufferings of the damned."[1] Here, for instance, is the assertion of no less a theologian than St. Thomas of Aquinum:—

"That the saints may enjoy their beatitude more thoroughly, and give more abundant thanks to God for it (*ut beatitudo sanctorum magis eis complaceat et de ea liberiores gratias Deo agant*), a perfect sight of the punishment of the damned is granted to them." —*Summa* iii. *Suppl. Qu.* 93, i.

So too Peter Lombard, the Master of the Sentences, "Therefore the elect shall go forth . . . to see the

[1] One of its ultimate sources may have been the fourth book of Esdras (Bensley, *Missing Fragments*, p. 67); another, a monstrous perversion and misinterpretation of an intense Apocalyptic metaphor, which has no connexion with the matter.

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torments of the impious, seeing which they will not be grieved, but will be satiated with joy (*non dolore efficientur, sed laetitia satiabuntur*), at the sight of the unutterable calamity of the impious."[1]

It is not wonderful that hosts of minor theologians should have repeated a sentiment for which they had such high authority.

Thus the German theologians of the "dogmatic" epoch all accept it. Luther, to the question whether the Blessed will not be saddened by seeing their nearest and dearest (*conjunctissimos*) tortured, answers, "Not the least in the world"; and Gerhard says that "the Blessed will see their friends and relations among the damned as often as they like (*quoties cunque voluerint!*), but without the least compassion."

"The view of the misery of the damned," said Jonathan Edwards, "will double the ardour of the love and gratitude of the saints in heaven."[2] Böldicke, in his *Versuch einer Theodicee*, argued that eternal torments proved the beneficence of the Deity, because they would so greatly heighten the happiness of the elect![3] Andrew Welwood speaks of the saints as "*overjoyed* in beholding the vengeance of God," and their beholding of the smoke of the torment of the wicked as "a passing delectation."

"This display of the divine character," said Samuel Hopkins, "will be most entertaining to all who love God, will give them the highest and most ineffable pleasure. *Should the fire of this eternal punishment cease, it would in a great measure obscure the light of heaven,* and put an end to a great part of the happiness and glory of the blessed." "The door of mercy will be shut," said Newcome in his *Catechetical Sermons*, "and all bowels of compassion

[1] *Sentent.* iv. 50, *ad fin.* [2] *Works*, vol. iv. Serm. xiii.

[3] It is to me perfectly astonishing that writers (like one in the *Church Quarterly Review*) can continue to repeat such conventional *nonsense* as that if there were no endless Hell there could be no God and no Love.

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denied, by God, who will laugh at their destruction; by angels and saints, who will rejoice when they see the vengeance; by their fellow-sufferer the devil, and the damned rejoicing over their misery."

What is this but to attribute to saints and angels that delight and exultation in the spectacle of horror, defeat, and anguish, which one would have thought more worthy of the hearts of fiends?[1] Nero and Caligula were regarded as exceptional monsters because they liked to look on for a few moments at the tortures of their victims, and Phalaris as a prodigy of detestable wickedness because he loved to hear them howl in his brazen bull; but in these writings of Christian men the howlings of the lost are described as a part of the very music of heaven, and their anguish unutterable and inconceivable, not for a time, but for ever, is set forth as giving a fresh thrill of bliss to the beatitude of heaven. God has said that one of the three things which He alone requires of us is "to love mercy." Will any honest man who is not entirely sophisticated by system say that such language as this is accordant with a love of mercy? Our Lord said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Is that beatitude to be obsolete in heaven? Does God cease there to be the God who declareth His Almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity?

"Is Heaven so high
That pity cannot breathe its air?
Its happy eyes for ever dry,
Its holy lips without a prayer?
My God! my God! if thither led,
By Thy free grace unmerited,
No palm or crown be mine, but let me keep
A heart that still can feel, and eyes that still can weep!"

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[1] "We leave it to the disciple of Mohammed, lying on his couch of sensuality, to look down with cruel delight upon a scene of unutterable and endless misery. *Koran*, lxxxiii."—CONSTABLE, *Future Punishment*, p. 42.

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4. But these are not by any means the only evils caused by trying to claim the sanction of revelation for the most inhuman and unwarrantable errors and misinterpretations of men.

They make sad the hearts which God has not made sad. "While I read such things," said the great Johannes Scotus Erigena [1]—the greatest and acutest of all the schoolmen—"I waver in amazement, and I totter smitten with the utmost horror." [2]

It is said that Jonathan Edwards himself—who has been one of the worst offenders in this direction,—Jonathan Edwards, the descendants of whose own congregation (as I am informed by his successor) cannot now read or listen to what he said without indignant astonishment—Jonathan Edwards, whose congregation used to listen to him with groans, and tears, and sighs, and beating of the breast, in sheer horror at his representations,—was himself filled with lively anguish at the pictures of hell-torments which he conceived it to be his duty to set forth. "I sink under the weight of this subject," exclaimed Saurin in his famous Sermon on Hell, "and I find in the thought a mortal poison which diffuseth itself into every period of my life, rendering society tiresome, nourishment insipid, pleasure disgustful, and life itself a cruel bitter." "In the distress and anguish of my spirit," writes the excellent Albert Barnes, "I confess I see not one ray to disclose to me why man should suffer to all eternity. I have never seen a particle of light thrown on these subjects that has given a moment's ease to my tortured mind. It is all dark—dark—dark to my soul, and I cannot disguise it." "Far be it from us," said John Foster, "to make light of the demerit of sin. But endless punishment—I admit my inability (I would say it reverently) to admit this belief together with a belief in the Divine Goodness—the belief that 'God is Love,' that 'His tender

[1] *Floruit* A.D. 858. [2] *De Div. Nat.* v. 87.

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mercies are over all His works.'"[1] "The same Gospel," says Isaac Taylor, "which penetrates our souls with warm emotions dispersive of selfishness, tempts us often to wish that itself were not true, or that it had not taught us so to feel."[2] "Oh, Dr. Emmons, Dr. Emmons," shrieked a woman on hearing a sermon of that terrible divine, "has God then no pity at all?"[3]

5. Again, they have filled the hearts of thousands, perhaps of millions, with defiant, and ignoble thoughts of God.[4] Here, for instance, are the words of a true and noble-hearted woman,—one of the most devout and self-sacrificing women whom this age, or any age, has seen. "Is it not a simple impertinence," says Miss Florence Nightingale, "for preachers and schoolmasters, literally *ex cathedra*, to be always inculcating .... what they call the commands of God .... and often representing Him as worse than a devil? Alas! for mankind might easily answer—'I cannot love because I am ordered. Least of all can I love One who seems only to make me miserable here to torture me hereafter. Show me that He is lovable, and I shall love Him without being told.' But does any preacher show us this? He may *say* that God is Love, but he shows Him to be hate, worse than any hate of man. As the Persian poet says, 'If God punishes me for doing evil by doing me evil, how is He better than I?' And it is hard to answer. For certainly

[1] John Foster, *On Future Punishment.*

[2] *Restoration of Belief*, p. 367.

[3] It is but a natural Nemesis on such teaching that the site of Dr. Emmons' church is now covered by one of the largest Universalist churches in America.

[4] "Pisistratus was once advised to put to death a youth who had aspired to his daughter's love; but he ordered him to be set at liberty. 'For,' said he, 'if I punish those who love my daughter, what can I do to those who hate her?' Our modern religion," says Professor David Swing of Chicago, "should learn a lesson here; for if we talk about God as Jonathan Edwards did, there is no form of cruelty left to ascribe to Satan."

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the worst man would hardly torture his enemy, if he could, for ever. All good men would save others if they could." There is more, and stronger. I do not, of course, endorse all that she says; but is it not an "awful responsibility" to teach in a manner which leads such a woman to use such words as these?

6. But, further, these pictures of hell,—these human additions to and fancies concerning the future state of retribution, have been the chief cause of religious persecution. It is the opinion of a modern critic that the two words in the Vulgate "*et ardent*"—"and they are burned"—spoken actually of dead boughs, and metaphorically of the state of souls so long as they are severed from Christ—kindled all the infamous fires of the Inquisition. It was these doctrines which made men think that they did God service by thrusting martyrs to gasp out their souls in the flames of Toledo and of Smithfield. "As the souls of heretics are hereafter to be eternally burning in hell,"—such was the reasoning of Queen Mary Tudor in defence of her awful persecution,—"there can be nothing more proper than for me to imitate the Divine Vengeance by burning them on earth."[1]

The popular belief in the inconceivable brutalities, which (as they were told) went on in hell, made men indifferent to the guilt and shame of inflicting torments on the bodies of their fellow men. The feeling comes out repeatedly in the Twelfth Meditation of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. He imagines that a king, while asleep, has been stung by a scorpion, and the scorpion is "cut, crushed, trampled, burnt to ashes; all is nothing to satisfy for that great crime. The sinner is a most vile worm. . . . By sinning

[1] "The burning of heretics had also *a semblance of everlasting burning* to which they adjudged their souls, as well as their bodies were condemned to the fire; but with this signal difference that they could find no effectual way to oblige God to execute their sentences, as they contrived against the civil magistrate."—Burnet, *Hist. of the Reformation*, i. 58 (ed. Pocock. See also vol. ii. *passim*).

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he acted in a hostile manner to God. What punishment shall be given him in hell to repair this great outrage? Flames, swords, devils? All is little, all is nothing." He then proceeds to tell us that the assassin of William, Prince of Orange, was hung up by the ends of his thumbs with 100 lb. of lead attached to his toes; then beaten with iron rods; then he had needles driven under his nails and skin; the next day his hairs were pulled out one by one; he was exposed to a slow fire, impaled, and during this agony his hand burnt with plates of iron;—and he adds, "If such pain was adjudged to him who had presumed to wound a prince, what torments could be given in hell to him who outraged and crucified God?"

7. And besides all this there is overwhelming proof that the degrading falsehoods embodied in these unwarrantable accretions to the faith are the most fruitful source of infidelity. If it involve an "awful responsibility" to try to restore the true faith on this subject, it involves a far more awful responsibility to preach the popular error. "All who teach it," says one, "are morally responsible for the atheism, suicide, madness, and gloom thereby produced." They are preaching inferences, and indulging in descriptions, which tend to array against them and against religion much that is noblest and most Christlike in the heart of man. There is nothing in which Secularists so much delight as in attempts to buttress up the current views of endless vengeance in such forms as those which I have denounced. They know that a religion which identifies itself with evil and fallible inferences dishonouring to the nature of God, and false to the drift of His revelation, can never retain its hold on the heart of man. The Church is no longer guilty of the unwisdom which once enlisted so many of her teachers against the advance of science, but she will suffer reverses yet more deadly if she continues to represent her doctrines of the future life in forms

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which are the mere inventions of scholasticizing theology, and which outrage the noblest instincts of mankind.

Mankind will humbly admit the cogency of the proof that there is a future retribution for sin, and that the retribution will continue as long as the soul continues to live in guilty selfishness—to hate the good and love the evil. But mankind recognises a divine element in the teaching by which all that is noblest in its own feelings is being led more and more to detest all disproportionate vengeance and all aimless cruelty. Not long ago a Roman Catholic Archbishop in a Paris conference advised his clergy to avoid preaching upon hell. "This question," he said, "will rather repel men's minds from the faith than win them to accept it."[1] He showed a wise insight into the human heart. The passages which I adduced from sceptical writers in *Eternal Hope* sufficiently prove that the popular errors concerning hell, and the revolting manner in which it has been preached, are the stronghold of modern irreligion. Such views have imperilled a thousand souls for every one which they have startled and aroused. Mankind will not reject the doctrine of a just and certain punishment; they will adore the Justice which only punishes in the desire to purify and save; but they can never worship a God who is presented to them in a guise entirely alien from the whole tenor of His revelations, with no excuse beyond the unreasoning perversion of a few isolated phrases. They will give their hearts to a Heavenly Father, awful in the holiness of a merciful, because remedial, severity; they cannot give their hearts to One who is invested by loveless religionism with the attributes of a more relentless Moloch. "They think," as Mr. Fowle says, "that hell [I should say the vulgar and

[1] Mgr. Chalandon, Archbishop of Aix.

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unwarranted misrepresentations of hell] is fatal to all religion."[1]

But then it is said you need the doctrine to arouse the wicked. That was the argument of St. Chrysostom, of St. Augustine, of St. Jerome, and it even misled Origen into an unfaithful "oeconomy." But it is an argument wholly mistaken; and it is even immoral to regard the supposed *usefulness* of the doctrine, and not its truth. Any falsehood must be injurious, and those falsehoods are most injurious which distort an underlying truth. But the notion that the vulgar errors about hell—the false additions to the teachings of Scripture respecting it—are "useful," is belied by all experience. It has been asserted by those who well know what they are saying, that the kind of Hell which has been described to them is "the standing joke of the multitude." "As to the worldly whom you hope to arouse by it," says Mr. Minton,[2] "I doubt if there is a single doctrine that has anything like its power to lull them to sleep." "The dogma of hell," says the Rev. Rudolph Suffield, after wide experience as Apostolic Missionary in England and Ireland, "did no moral or spiritual good, but rather the reverse. . . . It frightened, nay tortured, innocent young women and virtuous boys. It never (except in the rarest cases) deterred from the commission of sin. It caused unceasing mental and moral difficulties, lowered the idea of God, and drove devout persons from the God of hell to Mary. It always influenced the wrong people, and in a wrong way, and caused infidelity to some, temptations to others, and misery without virtue to most." Men will believe with trembling the salutary truth that, neither in this world nor in the next, will the wicked go unpunished; they simply will not believe the unscriptural horrors which I have quoted.

[1] Rev. T. Fowle, *An Essay on the Right Translation of* αἰών, p. 4.

[2] *The Way Everlasting*, p. 73.

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For centuries the coarse human enginery of such unwarranted fancies has been tried in vain.[1]

A few passages will suffice to prove that the false and unscriptural hell of revivalists is the chief hindrance to the spread of religion.

"The sceptic believes in his heart that there is a God, and the wicked shall be punished; but he crushes the idea of divine justice in his soul, because he has always been taught to associate it with raging flames and endless cruelties, which would soften the heart of a tiger, and make stones weep over the fate of the lost."—AUG. CALLET, *L'Enfer*, p. 340.

"Compared with this, every other objection to Christianity sinks into insignificance."—J. S. MILL, *Autobiography*, p. 41; *Three Essays*, p. 114.

"L'Eglise Romaine s'est porté le dernier coup: elle a consommé son suicide le jour où elle a fait Dieu implacable et la damnation éternelle."—GEORGE SAND, *Spiridion*, p. 302.

"If this be the logical result of accepting theories, better believe in no God at all."—LESLIE STEPHEN, *English Thought in Eighteenth Century*.

"The incredibility of this doctrine hath made some persons desperately doubt the truth of the whole body of that religion, whereof this is supposed to be a fundamental article, which shows it to be a great scandal to human reason."—*Future Punishment* (printed with Barrow's works).

Of those who really believed that such passages as I have quoted represented the revelation of God, "I cease to wonder," says the great French preacher, Saurin, "that the fear of hell has made some mad, and others melancholy." "The world would be

[1] "Give some tract about hell fire to one of the wild boys in a large town, and instead of being startled by it, he will laugh at it as something frightfully ridiculous."—DR. NEWMAN, *Grammar of Assent*, p. 453. He adds that the doctrine only angers the multitude and makes them blaspheme.

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one vast madhouse," says the American scholar, Hallsted,[1] "if a realising and continued pressure of such a belief was present." "Such a belief, if realised," says Archer Butler, "would scorch and wither up the powers of man." But for this very reason these pictures are rejected by the instinct of mankind, and all belief is undermined because they cannot accept the adjuncts of human invention by which it has been defaced.

Such, then, are some of the consequences which result from engrafting upon religion the accretions which it does not own. If they were really supported by Scripture the Church would have *insisted* on them, whereas she has not, by a single decree, or by a single article in her ancient Creeds, so much as *sanctioned* them. If they could certainly be deduced from Scripture there would not have been the immense divergence of opinion respecting the state of the dead, which has not only existed in all ages, but been permitted and recognised. If all the pages and volumes about never-ending agonies had been an expression of revealed truth, it would not be possible for such a multitude of earnest and holy men, deeply convinced of the inspiration of Scripture, to have arrived at the doctrine of conditional immortality; nor would it have been possible (to take but one instance out of hundreds) for a man so learned and so holy as Dr. Isaac Watts, "the flower of Nonconformist orthodoxy," to have said, "We go beyond what we are authorised to do when we say that the punishment of the wicked will be as long as the duration of God," and that he could not recall a single passage in Scripture which proved that the second death meant duration in endless torments.

But I have been charged again and again with "mawkish sentimentality" because my soul revolts at the thought of these material horrors. It does so,

[1] *Theology of the Bible*, p. 326.

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not as some of these writers have so charitably supposed, because I am "bribed" to believe in their mitigation by my personal dread of them; nor, again, because I think physical horrors necessarily worse than mental ones; but because such scenes and pictures of hell as those to which I have alluded could never be the natural consequence of a sinful life,[1] but could only result from what theologians represent as "the implacable vengeance" of God, to whom—by virtue of snatching out of Scripture a phrase here and there, regardless of its due meaning and perspective—they are not afraid to attribute an intensity and a permanence of cruel wrath, such as would be thought inconceivable in the vilest of wicked men. For the world has been unanimous in regarding the prolongation of needless suffering, together with a refinement in the application of torture, as the last worst phase of degradation in a Nabis or Caligula; and this feeling of horror is deepest in souls trained in the love of God, and in the tender precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. But such souls see no difficulty in believing that the moral penalty of sin, when unrepented of, is to shut us out from God's presence; that the punishment of sin is the congruous result of its own working; that we receive hereafter according to our deeds, and reap as we have sown.

"Mawkish sentimentality"—the phrase so applied is deeply instructive! It reveals the depth of that abyss of selfishness and unreality which yawns in the

[1] I was sorry that Dr. Salmon (*Cont. Rev.* xxxii. p. 186) should talk "of the different ways in which mental and physical pain impress my imagination." He says that I can contemplate "with moderate uneasiness the sinner suffering from the agonies of remorse or the pain of loss; but that he should endure any pain of sense is a thought too dreadful to entertain." Yes, but why "too dreadful"? Because to my mind it would degrade the conception of God. Sin might produce mental remorse by a natural and beneficent law; material fire and material worms, to burn and gnaw for ever, could only be created by awful vengeance.

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heart of the loveless religionist. It shows what can be the influence of an unworthy dogma, no less than of an immoral life, in that

> "It hardens all within
> And petrifies the feeling."

1. Let me try to illustrate the real significance of the phrase. Mr. Alger tells us how the proprietor of a great foundry in Germany, while he was talking one day to a workman who was feeding the furnace, accidentally stepped back, and fell headlong into a vat of glowing, molten iron. The thought of that awful end horrifies the imagination. I do not envy the man who can even read of it without a thrill of pity, or shudder of sympathetic horror. Yet he truly adds, "Multiply the individual instance by unnumbered millions, stretch the agony to temporal infinity, and we confront the 'orthodox' idea of hell."[1]

He may well add that if an all-powerful despot could stretch but one man on the rack for fifty years, and everybody, day and night, could hear his shrieks, the whole human race, though themselves blessed with all happiness, would, from Spitzbergen to Tierra del Fuego, rise as one man to go and implore mercy for that single offender; and that through all the spaces of heaven, from Sirius to Alcyone, would tingle a cry of pity and of horror for that one sufferer's sake.

2. Three years ago one or two poor Welsh miners and a boy were suddenly cut off in their retreat from the explosion of firedamp in a colliery. After a little time it was discovered that they were yet alive, and the heart of all England was bowed like the heart of one man, as morning after morning we read of the heroic efforts by which their rescue was attempted. And if all England had had but one arm, that arm would have been wielded with all its might to hew at

[1] *Doctrines of a Future Life*, 10th ed. pref.

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the barrier which separated those poor prisoners from life and light. And when at last they were drawn up out of the darkness, weak, and faint, and pale, and half dead, first there was a hush of awful pity, and then the whole of the vast rude multitude burst as with one touch of sympathy into sobs and tears of joy for the rescue of those poor men, because they had been saved from darkness and hunger which at the longest would have killed them in a day or two. And such peril can touch the hearts of a nation with trembling sympathy, and yet (oh God of mercy!) it is a *mawkish sentimentality* to feel pity for the unutterable and endless torture of which Christian teachers have written so calmly and elaborately as certain to be the fate of countless millions of our brother souls in hell!

3. A few years ago a youth named George Ebers was caught in the rapids above Niagara, and his boat was dashed to pieces on a rock just over the awful cataract. He saved himself by clutching the rock; and for hours together tens of thousands of spectators stood upon the shore, while every effort that thought or skill could suggest was made to save him. And there was not one of those spectators who did not feel a profound agitation, an almost breathless compassion for that poor boy. And when at last a raft was conveyed within reach of him, and he sprang forward and missed it, and was carried in their sight over the horrible precipice, one groan of agony was wrung from thousands of lips and hearts. Can the death—the probably painless and instantaneous death—of one poor fisher lad thus wring with compassion the souls of a multitude, and is it to be set down to a "mawkish sentimentality" if we are unable to think, without a weight of horror, of the millions who (as we are told) are suffering and are yet to suffer, and of the myriads who are daily being sent to suffer, an unendurable and unending torment?

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4. Once more: Two years ago an attempt was made to assassinate the Emperor of Germany. He was not very seriously wounded, but he is an old man, and it was known that the nervous shock might endanger his life, and that the chief condition of his safety was perfect quiet. Myriads of men and women were eager from hour to hour to know the chances of life or death, and thousands assembled hour by hour in the great square before his palace in Berlin. And because they knew the need that the old man should rest undisturbed, those thousands hushed even a murmur. They stood there in deepest silence waiting for tidings. There must have been many among them who were men of rough nature, and yet the thought of their Emperor's illness was enough to strike pity into all those hearts, and to fill them with considerate tenderness. Shall the chance multitudes of a city be thus swayed by thoughtful regard for the living, and shall it be forbidden us to be overwhelmed with pity when we are told of the inconceivable torments of millions of the dead, and among them it may be of some whom we have loved;—who, imperfect as they were (it may be) and sinful even to the last, and having been cut off with no time for repentance, in the very midst of their ordinary lives, are doomed by the common voice of religious teaching to endless anguish, and yet were not daring rebels against God, and were very kind, and loving, and true to us?

And as regards the difference between mental and physical anguish, let those try to estimate it who can. I for one am not inclined to say that the former, though so unlike in kind, may not be even less easy to endure than the other. In his great Sistine picture of the "Last Judgment," the genius of Michael Angelo has subtly indicated this terrible truth. A fiend is dragging down a lost soul into the abyss, and has

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driven his fangs into the fleshy part of the leg. But the lost soul is wholly unconscious of the anguish. It is looking upwards at the wrathful avenging Figure in the clouds, conscious not of physical agony but only of spiritual loss.

Yet even as regards that worm which, as Theophylact says,[1] is the conscience of each, and that fire which is the burning memory of unrepented and unforgiven sins, I think it unwise for theological writers to give the reins to their imagination.

Take these three pictures by contemporary divines of the mental agonies of hell.

DR. PUSEY.—"Apart from all those terrific physical miseries of which our Lord speaks . . . the society of the damned were misery unutterable. Gather in one in your mind an assembly of all those men and women, from whom, whether in history or in fiction, your memory most shrinks; gather in mind all which is most loathsome, most revolting. Conceive the fierce fiery eyes of hate, spite, frenzied rage were fixed on thee, looking thee through and through with hate . . . hear those yells of blaspheming concentrated hate as they echo along the lurid vault of hell; every one hating every one."—*Parochial Sermons.*

CARDINAL NEWMAN.—"O terrible moment for the soul . . . when the Judge speaks and consigns it to the jailers till it shall pay the endless debt which lies against it. Impossible! I a lost soul? I separated from hope and from peace for ever? It is not I of whom the Judge so spake! There is a mistake somewhere! Christ, Saviour, hold my hand one minute to explain it; my name is Demas; I am but Demas, not Judas . . . What! eternal pain for me? Impossible! It shall not be so! And the poor soul struggles and wrestles in the grasp of the mighty demon which has hold of it, and whose every touch is torment. Oh, atrocious! it shrieks in agony, and in anger too, as if

[1] See *supra*, p. 92.

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the very keenness of the infliction were a proof of its injustice. A second and a third, I can bear no more! Stop, horrible fiend! give over! I am a man, and not such as thou! I am not food for thee and sport for thee! I have been taught religion; I have had a conscience; I have a cultivated mind; I am well versed in science and art, I am a philosopher, or a poet, or a hero. Nay, I have received the grace of the Redeemer; I have attended the sacraments for years; I have been a Catholic from a child; I died in communion with the Church; nothing, nothing which I have ever been, which I have ever seen, bears any resemblance to thee, and to the flame and stench which exhale from thee; so I defy thee, and abjure thee, O enemy of man! Alas! poor soul! and whilst it thus fights with that destiny which it has brought upon itself, and those companions which it has chosen, the man's name perhaps is solemnly chanted forth . . . among his friends on earth. Men . . . appeal to his authority—quote his words—write his history. So comprehensive a mind, never was his equal in society. So great a benefactor to his kind, his philosophy so profound. Oh vanity! vanity of vanities! all is vanity! What profiteth it? what profiteth it? his soul is in hell, oh ye children of men! While thus ye speak his soul is in the beginnings of those torments in which his body will soon have part, and which will never die."[1]

BISHOP WILBERFORCE.—"In her short life" (he was speaking of a little schoolgirl) "she had not seldom played truant, had told some lies, had been obstinate and disobedient; now she had to bid farewell to heaven and hope, to her parents, her brother, and her sisters. What was her agony of grief that she would never again look on their faces. . . . Henceforth she must dwell among beings on whom there is no check or restraint. The worst of men are there, with

[1] Sermon on *Neglect of Divine Calls and Warnings*. See too sermons on *The Individuality of the Soul*.

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every spark of human feeling extinguished, without any care to moderate the fury of their desperate rage."

This latter passage exactly resembles one from Mr. Moody's sermon on hell, who in speaking of the way in which a "young lady" would be shocked if on her way home she were accosted by a drunken man, goes on to say, that if she does not "find Christ," "libertines, and drunkards, and murderers will be her endless companions in hell," describing a hell of brutal anarchy and chaotic riot. Thus do extremes meet, and the great bishop uses language as unwarranted by Scripture as the revivalist. But I am told on very high authority that before he died, Bishop Wilberforce, like other great and learned bishops whom I could name, had come to repudiate all such treatment of the subject, and to lean his heart to the larger hope which is preached by his distinguished son.[1]

Now no one will deny that these pictures of hell are less revolting, more refined, than the "Tartarean drench" with which other writers have steeped their pages. Nor will any one be surprised that this is the case. And yet, in all these fierce fiery eyes, and blaspheming yells, and lurid vaults, and mutual hatreds, and mighty demons, and brutal rioting drunkards, and unchecked debauchees, whose every touch is torment, have we not language which differs widely from the language of Scripture? Are not both passages full of conceptions which either find no direct warrant in the Word of God, or are, at the best, only an expansion of metaphors which are *not* so expanded in Scripture, and are themselves capable, in many instances, of a widely different interpretation?

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[1] On similarly high authority I am told the same thing of the late eminent American Bishop McIlvaine.

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"I believe in the Holy Ghost," is one of the articles of the Apostles' Creed; and surely we may believe that the Holy Ghost is still teaching us—teaching nations as well as individual men, teaching us to interpret Scripture by nature, and by history, and by science, and by experience, and by the wider thoughts of men. And Christ said, "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Is He not then with nations, with mankind, no less than with individual men? Is Toleration a divine duty? Is He or is He not revealing Himself in the human heart, in the human conscience, in the human intellect, in the common charities, the common justice, and the common humanities of life? Is it true, as the Emperor Maximilian said, that "to offer violence to the conscience is to assail the very citadel of heaven"? Is it always, and under all circumstances, a sin to put men to death, or to inflict anguish upon them for their conscientious opinions? Were the deeds of the Inquisition justifiable or unjustifiable? Were the fires of Smithfield a glory to those who kindled them, or a shame? If intolerance and religious persecution be crimes, how long have we learnt the lesson? And is the spirit which has taught these lessons to us a divine or a deceiving spirit? But if we have learnt these lessons, is it not a certain fact that the main difficulty in learning them arose from theological interpretations of Scripture; and that the main obstacle to their acceptance was found in the sense put on half-a-dozen Scripture texts? If the Church and the world were unanimously wrong in interpreting these—if their *primâ facie* sense has been proved *not* to be their real sense; if, whatever be their real sense, we see that, *at any rate*, God has now taught us the sacred duty of tolerance—ought not divines to learn that, in their fancied certainty in explaining Scripture they are liable to the danger of most deadly misinterpretation? How often, when Churchmen have used

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texts to support tyranny, and maintain slavery, and oppose science, and justify assassination, and sanction massacres, and murder poor old women as witches, and kindle the flames of persecution, how often might the indignant world have exclaimed:

> "Foul shame and scorn be on ye all,
> Who turn the good to evil;
> Who steal the Bible from the Lord,
> And give it to the devil.
>
> "Than garbled text and parchment law
> I own a statute higher;
> And God is true—were every book
> And every man a liar."

Nothing has more shaken men's faith in that holy Book than this most erroneous and unwarranted parade of "Scriptural" support for doctrines fatal to the progress, or abhorrent to the moral sense of mankind. Then shall the Scriptures do all their full and blessed work for the heart of men, when an ignorant literalism has ceased to teach that texts are to be interpreted "as if they had been written yesterday," and that the daring hyperboles of Semitic poetry, and the vague generalities of Semitic metaphor—scattered here and there, amid many of a very different significance, over the literature of a thousand years—are susceptible of no meaning except such as they derived from the rules of modern grammar and Western thought.

Again, WHO has taught us the lesson of pity? There can be no question that the sense of pity for human sufferings, of sympathy for human wrongs, of solidarity with all who are in pain or sorrow, has been developed in this age to an extent not known at any previous period of the world's history.

It is an historic fact that this age is pre-eminently a merciful age: an age which feels a sense of horror for all needless anguish, a sense of indignation against all who inflict it, or who have no compassion for those

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on whom it falls. We could not tolerate for a moment the infliction of the tortures which were daily inflicted in past centuries, which are still daily inflicted in barbarous and heathen lands. The foul dungeons, and awful implements of the dark ages—dungeons which were then habitually filled with prisoners, implements with which the human body was then constantly wrenched and torn—make our blood freeze with horror.[1] Were it known in these days that even the most atrocious malefactor had been stretched on the rack or broken on the wheel, the prison in which such a deed was done would be stormed and burnt to ashes to-morrow by the honest fury of the multitude. We have abolished not only the rack and the pillory, but even the treadmill and the stocks. Public opinion can now but barely tolerate that punishment of the lash, even for the most atrocious outrages, which in the days of our fathers was an every-day incident of naval and military life, and was then the penalty of the most venial offences. Whence have we learnt this sense of pity? Is it a shame to us or an honour? and does it show growth or degeneracy in the knowledge of God's will to man? And if it be a divine thing, is there any human being who can doubt that it is this sense of pity, and of mercy, and of brotherhood, which has worked more powerfully than any other cause to make men reconsider, whether by their unwarranted amplifications of Scripture, and their fallible inferences from it, they had not attributed to God that which would be—humanly speaking—impossible to reconcile with all that He Himself has taught us about Himself in His own Word, and still more in the life and death and passion of the Son whom He sent to die for us? Is it not a sense of pity—is it not faith in God as a

[1] The reader may be reminded of the punishment of John of Leyden and (two centuries later) of Damiens. For the treatment of the Anabaptist leaders see Karl Hase, *Neue Propheten*. See *supra*, p. 117.

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God of love—is it not a conviction that "Mercy boasteth over Judgment"—which would make most modern congregations reject with horror the sermons which were once heard from Puritan and mediæval pulpits, and utterly refuse to sing such hymns as,

> "His nostrils breathe out fiery streams,
> And from His awful tongue
> A sovereign voice divides the flames,
> And thunder rolls along.
>
> "Think, oh! my soul, the dreadful day,
> When this incensèd God
> Shall rend the sky, and burn the sea,
> And fling His wrath abroad.
>
> "Tempests of angry fire shall roll
> To blast the rebel worm,
> And beat upon his naked soul
> In one eternal storm."

How many of our readers are there who would not blush with hot shame if they were invited to "praise God by singing" such words as those? Yet is not the feeling which rejects such utterances the very same feeling which has made life more tender and more tolerable than it has been in any previous epoch of the world? And does not the feeling come—as all the world's amelioration has come—from entering more deeply into the heart of Christ?

And yet, though this universal sense of pity be among us, a feeling almost of yesterday; though even women would once tolerate to be present at scenes of cruelty to men and animals which would stir us to a passion of indignation; though they calmly sanctioned institutions of the most horrible cruelty; yet even in ages when cruelty was common —when the value of human life was lightly esteemed —when no man could live exempt from the possibility of torture, at the very thought of which our blood curdles—the sense of pity *did* wake again and again to modify or to repudiate what men had taught respecting hell.

Take these two legends of the middle ages as

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instances. It is said that St. Christina, a Virgin,[1] was suffered to pass (like Dante) through hell, purgatory, and paradise. In God's presence she was then allowed to choose whether she would stay in heaven or return to earth in order to aid the souls in purgatory by her penitence and prayers. She chose to return, and angels conveyed her soul back to her body, which then arose from its coffin. Her pity for even temporary sufferers was strong enough to make her give up the joys of heaven.

Again, we are told in the works of the pseudo-Dionysius, that St. Carpus after his martyrdom in the reign of Decius, saw the Lord Christ surrounded by angels in the clouds, while at the bottom of a gulf below, he saw the heathen who had despised His preaching, and who were being beaten by demons with whips and serpents, and pushed into the flames. Carpus was about to curse them; but having lifted up his eyes, he saw the Saviour stretching forth His hands to these miserable ones, and saying, "Carpus, it is I whom thou wouldst smite; for I am still ready to suffer for men."[2]

And why is it that whole nations of Christendom have embraced a passionate Mariolatry? Is it not mainly because they naturally turn to the heart of a human Mother, because they feel convinced that in it must reign a pity, which popular teaching has made them despair of finding in Him who has never been really represented to them as the God of love? Is it not, as Roman Catholic priests have told us, because they naturally turn to her whom they regard as the saver from purgatory, rather than to Him of whom human ignorance has taught them to think mainly as the God of hell?

What were the thoughts which lay deep in the hearts of those who dreamt these legends? Perhaps

[1] Bollandist, *Acta Sanctorum*, Aug. 21.
[2] Dionys. Areop. *Ep.* vii. See Ozanam, *Poëtes Franciscains*, p. 426.

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the modern poets may help to interpret them. For the poets are they who feel most, and whose feelings are very deep and true, and who have been ever among the best teachers of mankind.

> "The wish, that of the living whole
> No life may fail beyond the grave,
> Derives it not from what we have
> The likest God within the soul?"

So sings the great poet who, more perhaps than any living man, has taught us, not at any rate to be afraid of the wish and hope—even if it can never amount to a tenet of faith—

> "That somehow good
> Will be the final goal of ill,
> To pangs of nature, sins of will,
> Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;
>
> "That nothing walks with aimless feet;
> That not one life shall be destroy'd,
> Or cast as rubbish to the void,
> When God hath made the pile complete;
>
> "That not a worm is cloven in vain;
> That not a moth with vain desire
> Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire,
> Or but subserves another's gain.
>
> "Behold, we know not anything;
> I can but trust that good shall fall
> At last—far off—at last, to all,
> And every winter change to spring."

It is the same thought which gives such tenderness and passion and fiery yearning to so many verses of the great American poet, John Greenleaf Whittier—

> "For awed by Sinai's mount of Law,
> The trembling faith alone sufficed,
> That through its cloud and flame he saw
> The sweet sad face of Christ.
>
> "And listening with his forehead bowed,
> Heard the Divine compassion fill
> The pauses of the thunder-cloud
> With whispers small and still."

And to take but one other instance we find the same thought very prominent in the pages of the

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learned clergyman who is the author of *Olrig Grange* and other very striking poems.

"'Should I be nearer Christ,' she said,
'By pitying less
The sinful living or woful dead
In their helplessness?'
And the angels all were silent.

"'Should I be liker Christ were I
To love no more
The loved, who in their anguish lie
Outside the door?'
And the angels all were silent.

"'Did He not hang on the cursèd tree,
And bear its shame?
And clasp to His heart, for love of me,
My guilt and blame?'
And the angels all were silent.

"The Lord Himself stood by the gate,
And heard her speak
Those tender words compassionate,
Gentle and meek;
And the angels all were silent.

"Now pity is the touch of God
In human hearts,
And from that way He ever trod
He ne'er departs;
And the angels all were silent."

I will not quote any more of the poem. It is bolder than anything which I dare, or have it granted me, to endorse; but of this I feel sure—that the pity which breathes through it, if it be not the voice of the multitude of teachers, is yet the deepest voice of the loving human soul.

But when the reader has thought of what men have said, and how theologians have written, in century after century, about "this rain-storm of agonised drops of immortality to feed and freshen the quenchless fires of damnation"; when he has seen the proofs of the extent to which these descriptions have alienated men's hearts from God and from Christ; when he has asked himself whether he really believes the assertions of those passages,

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knowing what it is that he believes; when he learns that such statements are now declared, on the highest authority, to be "opinions" only, and not matter of faith; when he is made acquainted, perhaps for the first time, with the historic fact that the Church has never, either in her earliest or her latest ages, required a belief in these material horrors which yet have been, and perhaps until a few years ago still were, the common opinion of Christians: let him ask whether the charge of "coarse and violently-coloured rhetoric" was to be brought against me, when I endeavoured to show that in a material fire and a material agony no Christian is required to believe,—or whether that charge lies rather at the door of those who have obscured the brightness of God's image in the hearts of men by the ignorance of a fallible exegesis which rejected the whole tenor of that revelation which tells us that "God is Love," while it based its system of Eschatology on the sand of metaphorical expressions of which it had never understood the true significance, and of which it terribly exaggerated the right perspective? If I spoke to repudiate the material horrors of Dante and Jeremy Taylor, and modern preachers, together with those frightful woodcuts of Pinamonti, which, with many like them, are still enormously circulated in Roman Catholic countries,—was there not a cause? It is said that St. Bernard, having seen a vision of hell, never laughed again. Without having seen such a place, even in vision, it would be strange if a real intelligential belief of all that men have written respecting it would not drive all laughter from the hearts of all good and merciful men for ever. But since such things are not of faith—

> "What can we do o'er whom the unbeholden
> Hangs in a light wherewith we dare not cope?
> What but look sunward, and with faces golden,
> Speak to each other softly of a hope?"

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CHAPTER V.

THE SECOND ACCRETION TO CATHOLIC DOCTRINE —THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF MANKIND ARE DOOMED TO ENDLESS TORMENTS.

רב חסד מטה כלפי חסד. "The Lord of Pity inclines to Pity."
—Proverb of the School of Hillel.

"How should Grace
One living gem disown,
One pearly mote, one diamond small,
One sparkle of the unearthly light?
Go where the waters fall
Sheer from the mountain's height—
They rush and roar, they whirl and leap,
Not wilder drives the wintry storm,
Yet a strong law they keep,
Strange powers their course inform.
Yet in dim caves they softly blend
In dreams of mortals unespied:
One in their awful end,
One their unfailing Guide."—KEBLE.

I PASS to the second point.

I repudiated as an accretion to the faith of Christians, and as forming no true or essential part of it, the belief "that the doom of everlasting damnation is incurred by the vast majority of mankind."

Those who assert this assert their own "opinion." They may suppose that they have the strongest grounds for that opinion, but they have no right to try and enforce it upon others as a matter of

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faith. Yet this has been done by theologians both dead and living, times without number.

I should have thought that the very first command to Adam and to Noah, and the similar command to Jacob, and the promise to Abraham that, as a special blessing, his seed should be as the sand of the sea for multitude, would alone be sufficient to show that it is utterly alien from God's purpose that Satan, and not the Heavenly Father, should win the vast mass of human souls. If the popular views be true, the multiplication of the human race is an unmitigated evil, for it serves mainly to people with agonising myriads an endless hell. If the popular views be true—if most souls are lost—then to bring human beings into the world can be little short of a selfish crime.[1]

"Matters of faith" are those truths to which the Church demands assent from all who belong to her communion. Other doctrines are left open as matters of opinion, respecting which she requires no unanimity.

Now I was of course aware that the doom of the majority to endless torment was not a matter of faith. I knew that it could not be deduced from Scripture, and that it was no necessary part of the belief of Christians.

I am now told on all sides, even by evangelical newspapers, that in repudiating this popular accretion, —in declaring that it was a mere individual opinion, and that it ought not to be required of any man to be believed,—I was perfectly correct. Dr. Pusey says that this belief in the perdition of the mass of mankind "*has no solid foundation whatever.*"[2]

[1] Adam to Eve—

> "Childless thou art, childless remain; so Death
> Shall be deceived his glut, and with us two
> Be forced to satisfy his ravenous maw."
>
> *Par. Lost*, x. 989.

[2] *What is of Faith*, p. 6.

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"You aim," says Cardinal Newman in a letter to Dr. Plumptre, "at withdrawing from so awful a doom vast multitudes who have popularly been considered to fall into it . . . . There is nothing, I think, in the view incompatible with the faith of Catholics."

We are told that among Roman Catholics this was also the view of the late Dr. Faber, of Lacordaire, of Père Ravignan, of Père Gratry, of many members of the religious orders. So learned a theologian as Mr. H. N. Oxenham avows it as his own belief, as also does such a Protestant writer as Dr. Angus. Nay more, I now find the clearest traces of a strong leaning to it in quarters so diverse as the newspapers which circulate widely among the English clergy—the *Guardian*, the *Record*, and the *Church Times*. Thus I read in the *Record* newspaper (October 20, 1880) this remarkable sentence. After saying that the complete remedy for my "agonised despair" lies in the distinction between "justification and sanctification," and "a clear mental grip of the completed atonement of Christ"—doctrines respecting which I may perhaps appeal to my *Life of St. Paul*, to prove that I have stated and defended my own absolute belief in them more fully than ever the *Record* has done—it adds, "What human being can tell whether, even in a dying moment, the sinner may not have grasped the Saviour? No doubt we are taught that *in the present dispensation* the saved are a small number compared with the lost; *but Scripture affords ample grounds for believing that it will not be always thus*, and that ultimately the saved number of Adam's race will outnumber the lost to a degree beyond all calculation. The tenderest heart that ever beat in human breast is cold and hard compared to the living heart of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of Him we are assured that 'He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.'" I read such words in such a quarter with deep thankfulness. The *Guardian* (August 11, 1880) writes: "We agree with Dr. Farrar

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that Dr. Pusey has in this volume given a very serious correction to much of what is popular theology and teaching." But, it truly adds, "the old warnings against trusting to a skin-deep or a deathbed repentance will not be less necessary when we are told, and told with truth, that we must not despair of souls even when we are ignorant of their hopes of grace, and that there is no ground for believing that the majority of mankind are lost."

Was I then fighting with shadows? I ask again, —for what I said had I no cause?

I had *this* cause, that the damnation of the vast majority of mankind has been the normal teaching of theologians in every age since the earliest. But the consent of the many, if it be unreasonable and unscriptural, what is it but ancient error?[1]

It is true that in no Synod, in no Council, by no decree has the Church ever required this belief. It is also true, as Dr. Pusey says, that there are very few individual souls respecting whose salvation the Church of God has ventured openly to express a doubt.[2] "The Church," says the learned and saintly Ozanam, "has inscribed thousands of names in the catalogue of saints, she has never pronounced the damnation of a single individual"—with the exception, as he adds in a note, of Judas Iscariot.

Yet I assert, and I shall prove, that the Christian writings of every age abound in assertions that the few only will be saved. Even in some of the so-called "answers" to my sermons, the difficulty was only met by the argument that "the majority of mankind die in infancy, and therefore that the majority of mankind would be saved"! It is not worth while to argue with writers who take refuge in quibbles.

[1] "Multorum consensus aut vetus consuetudo si ratione aut sacrorum auctoritate librorum careat quid aliud quam vetus error est?"—CURIO, *De Amplitud. Beati Regni*, p. 25.

[2] *What is of Faith*, p. 11.

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By the "majority of mankind" I mean, as all serious writers have meant, the majority of those who have attained to years of discretion. But by using such an argument these writers imply their belief, and it is still the common opinion of those who claim to be "orthodox"—too often at the expense of "speaking deceitfully for God"[1]—that most men "perish"; and by this they mean that most men pass after death into a life of endless torments.[2]

They have not only held this, but further, that the vast majority of *Christians* also pass after death into endless torments.[3]

1. Of the case of unbaptised *Infants* I will say very little. Their "damnation" is graciously asserted to be "of a very slight character." Still what has been the opinion of most Christian writers since the days of St. Augustine about them?

Their damnation was affirmed by the second canon of the Council of Carthage.[4]

At the Synod of Diospolis, A.D. 415, it was made one of the seven express charges against Pelagius that he had taught "that infants dying unbaptised enjoy eternal life, though they do not enter the Kingdom of Heaven."[5]

"It can be lightly said," says St. Augustine, "that infants, passing out of the body without baptism, will

[1] Job xiii. 7. "Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for Him?"

[2] It is simply a modern reaction, caused by the growth of pity and humanity in the hearts of men, which, as M. Charles de Rémusat said, "has so greatly widened the conditions of salvation, that the doctrine of the few that are saved is now replaced by that of the few that are lost."—C. DE RÉMUSAT, *Rev. des Deux Mondes*, June 15, 1865.

[3] I say after death, because such writers either (with the Catechism of Westminster divines) deny the existence of an Intermediate State at all, or hold it in such a way as to render it meaningless.

[4] Ad. 412, Labbaeus *Concil.* ii. 1510.

[5] "Quoniam infantes etiam, si non baptizentur, non habeant vitam aeternam." — MARIUS MERCATOR, *Commonit.* i.; Gieseler, i. 374.

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be in a damnation the mildest of all."[1] He condemned the notion of a *limbus infantum*, urging that there was no middle place. Any one who was not with Christ could not, he said, be anywhere except with the devil.[2]

Dante sees the spirits of unbaptised infants in the first circle of the Inferno, where they live in desire of seeing God, but without hope.[3]

The damnation of infants was an acknowledged doctrine of Calvinism. When George Keith impugned the doctrine, Cotton Mather, and other Boston ministers wrote a treatise against him (A.D. 1690), and expressly maintained the reprobation of infants if unbaptised.[4]

It was also the all but universal opinion among Roman Catholics. In 1696 Cardinal Sfondrati wrote a treatise to show that, though not admitted to heaven, unbaptised infants would hereafter be supremely happy.[5] But no less a person than the great Bossuet made a complaint to Innocent XII. requesting him

[1] Aug. *De Peccat.* i. 16; *Enchir.* 93. "Mitissima sane poena eorum erit," &c. See Pet. Lombard, *Sentent. II. Dist.* xxxiii. *e.*

[2] *De Peccat.* i. 28; Hagenbach, *Hist. of Doctr.* i. 390.

[3] *Inferno*, iv. 28-43 (quoted in *Eternal Hope*, p. 65).

[4] For abundant evidence, see Andrew Norton, *Tracts concerning Christianity*, pp. 179-197; and see Calvin, *Tract. Theol. Opp.* viii. 644.

[5] The title of this book, which I have consulted, was Coelest. Sfondratus, *Nodus praedestinationis ex S. Litteris, &c. dissolutus. Accedit Appendix sive Litterae Parvulorum sine Baptismo mortuorum, scriptae e limbis ad suae quietis perturbatores.* The Cardinal was a man of saintly character and tender heart, and his book was posthumous. He dwelt in it throughout on the infinite love of God, His will to save man ("Deum serio, impensissime, et quantum in se efficaciter, omnium, hominum salutem velle"), His necessary love to His creatures, &c. A full account of his book will be found in *Acta Eruditorum*, 1697, pp. 281-293. It created an alarm in the religious world, as so many other of the best books have done, and was answered in a crowd of eager pamphlets, written by archbishops, bishops, monks, &c., all proving that he was "inconsistent" and heretical. In the *Acta Eruditorum* for 1701 (pp. 65-68), I read that one of these answers adduced one hundred and two erroneous propositions from this book, written to defend, from Scripture and the Fathers, the love of God! "Tot tamque pertinacibus adversariis impetitum est scriptum illud, concordiae causa editum, ut omnino

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to condemn the book [1]; and numbers of writers rushed into the field to anathematize its doctrines. In 1770 a reply was written by Ignazio Bianchi with the express object of demonstrating that infants dying without baptism or martyrdom could not be saved.

Need we even go beyond the pale of our own Church to see what was the general opinion?

The Rubric at the end of our Baptismal Service says that "children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved"; but in the "Articles to establish Christian Quietness," in 1536, we find the words, "Infants, dying in their infancy, shall undoubtedly be saved thereby" [*i.e.* by baptism], "*and else not.*" In his book on *Regeneration in Baptism*,[2] Bishop Bethell admits that it was the common opinion of the ancient Christians that unbaptized children were not saved.

"It is only during the last forty years," says Mr. E. White, "as we learn from Mr. Logan's *Words of Comfort for Bereaved Parents*, that the Scottish Churches have ventured to repudiate the old blasphemy against God's justice and goodness involved in the doctrine of the everlasting woe of non-elect infants. Formerly Scottish parents seem to have believed that their dead babes had probably fallen into the burning hands of some invisible Moloch. A more fiendish dogma than this is inconceivable—the consummation of theological hardness of heart." [3]

2. But passing over this question, since most reasonable men excluded the notion of anguish from this

adversis astris natum videatur."—*Act. Erud.* 1701, p. 65. The Pope, however, did not condemn it. It was said of Pope Innocent XII. "Il papa non è teologo, è jurista," and happily the sense and manliness of Christian statesmen has, not seldom, saved the Church from the pitiless aberrations of professed theologians.

[1] The Abbé Le Dieu, in his Memoir of Bossuet, says that he occupied much time, during his last years, in answering Sfondrati's book. [2] P. xiv. [3] *Life in Christ*, p. 326.

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damnation of infants,—except perhaps those Calvinists who spoke about "infants an ell long crawling on the floor of hell"—what have been the prevalent opinions (2) as to the salvation of *the Heathen*, who, even alone, form the vast majority of mankind?

St. Francis Xavier wrote, in 1552, "One of the things that most pains and torments these Japanese is that we teach them that the prison of hell is irrevocably shut. For they grieve over the fate of their departed children, of their parents and relatives; and they often show their grief by their tears. So they ask us if there is any hope . . . . and I am obliged to answer that there is absolutely none. The grief at this affects and torments them wonderfully; they almost pine away with sorrow. . . . I can hardly restrain my tears sometimes at seeing many so dear to my heart suffer such intense pain about a thing which is already done with and can never be undone."

Calvin writes, "Again I ask whence it happened that the fall of Adam involved, without remedy, in eternal death so many nations, together with their infant children, except because it so seemed good to God? A decree horrible, I confess, and yet true."[1]

The opinion of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, as expressed in their Larger Catechism, is that "they who, having never heard the Gospel, know not Jesus Christ, and believe not in Him, cannot be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature or to the law of that religion which they profess."[2]

And in the Westminster Confession of Faith they add that to assert and maintain that the heathen may be so saved "is very pernicious, and to be detested." And of the non-elect they say that "God was pleased . . . to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice"!

[1] *Institutes*, iii. 23, § 7.

[2] *Ans. to Qu.* 90.

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This must be carefully distinguished from the dogmatic statement of our own Eighteenth Article, of which the meaning is very different, though some of the words are the same. It is needless to say that though its words, like those of the *Reformatio Legum*,[1] look as if they imperatively exclude all hope for the heathen, no reasonable being now takes them in that sense. The man who says that Socrates and Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus are inevitably doomed to endless torments puts himself out of court as one who is beyond the reach of reason or of charity. They, no less than we, may be saved, not indeed by their profession or their morality, but by Him whom they knew not in His outward manifestation. "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation He that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him."

But this opinion, that the heathen all perish, has continued to this day. The well-known Dr. Nathanael Emmons, writing on "the hopeless state of the heathen," maintains that "*all the heathen will finally perish*";[2] and a little farther on makes the awful assertion,—which assigns to everlasting perdition all Arminians, and all Roman Catholics, and the vast majority of Churchmen and divines in all Churches,—that "it is absolutely necessary to approve of the doctrine of reprobation in order to be saved." And even in 1857 Enoch Pond, alluding to the future state of the heathen, writes that "the great body of the adult heathen . . . will lose their souls for ever."[3]

Indeed it seems superfluous to pause over the proof that the everlasting damnation of the heathen has

[1] "Horrible and vain is the audacity of those who contend that men may hope for salvation in every religion and sect which they may profess."—*Reform. Legum.*

[2] Emmons, *Works*, vi. 284-297. Foggini begins his book *De Paucitate Salvandorum*, with the remark that no one can possibly be saved out of the bosom of the Catholic Church.

[3] See Alger, p. 959.

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been the common opinion in the Church,[1] when we find that whole treatises have been written to overthrow the common opinion as to the damnation of even the purest and the most illustrious of them. Thus there are two dissertations by Engelcken (*d.* 1742) to show that Pythagoras was not a proselyte, and therefore was not saved; in 1666 a book was written to show that Plato was saved; in 1487 a pamphlet by Lambertin de Moule to show the probability that Aristotle was saved, and another on the same subject by Liceiti in 1645, and by Meier in 1698.[2] The salvation of Seneca found a champion in Schoeps (1765), and it was a common belief in the middle ages that the Emperor Trajan had been rescued, not from purgatory, but even from hell, by the prayers of St. Gregory the Great.[3] Luther was thought to have shown an exceptional boldness when he expressed the merciful hope that "our dear God would be merciful to Cicero, and to others like him." But if it was only a dangerous liberalism to suppose that two or three such heathen saints were saved, what must have been the current opinion as to the fate of the majority?

Nor was it only the heathen who were thus doomed. In the seventeenth century it was a common theme of some Roman Catholic writers that "Protestancy unrepented destroys salvation." It was a book with this theme by Matthias Wilson which called forth the famous answer of Chillingworth on the *Religion of Protestants*. On the other hand the Protestant Du Moulin was taxed with culpable laxity for admitting that some Roman Catholics might be saved.

But to return to the heathen: the notion that they perish has been till very recent times the avowed

[1] Clem. Alex. *Strom.* vi. 6 takes (as might have been expected) the milder view.

[2] See Bayle, *Dict. s. v.* "Aristotle."

[3] See Bayle, *s. v.* "Trajan"; Mrs. Jameson, *Sacr. and Legendary Arts*, i. 321; *supra*, pp. 84-86.

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argument of many who,—most justly and righteously, but with a rash statement of the ground of their appeals —have urged on the Christian Church the sacred duty of missions. Mr. Alger has quoted such statements as these.[1] An American missionary to China said, in a public address on his return, "Fifty thousand a day go down to the fire that is not quenched . . . should you not think at least once a day of the fifty thousand who on that day sink to the doom of the lost?" Again, the American Board of Missions say in their appeal, "Within the last thirty years a whole generation of five hundred millions have gone down to eternal death"; and again in their tract on "The Great Motive to Missionary Effort," "the heathen . . . are expressly doomed to perdition. Six hundred millions of deathless souls on the brink of hell! What a spectacle!" Again, "The most popular preacher in England has recently asked his fellow-believers, 'Can we go to our beds and sleep while China, India, Japan, and other nations are being damned?'"[2]

If I said that the awful fiery doom of the vast mass of mankind was an accretion to what the Church requires us to believe,—was there not a cause?

3. But now, without specially considering the case of Infants, or of the Heathen, let us see what has been the ordinary view of the Church on the *general* question whether many or few are saved.

It may be objected, we have no right even to ask such a question. It may be so. Nevertheless it has been asked in all ages. When the disciples asked an analogous question of our Lord, He declined to give any answer, and only bade them each to "strive to enter in at the strait gate, which many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able."[3] And on another occasion He said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate," since the majority were passing through the

[1] *Doctrine of a Future State*, p. 544.
[2] *Id.* pref. p. iv.
[3] Luke xiii. 24.

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wide gate, and walking in the broad way.[1] But that He was speaking of this life, and this one primarily if not exclusively, appears from this, that the question of the disciples was not, "Are there few that be saved?" but "Are there few *who are in the way of salvation?*" And the fact that "few" are now walking in that road must be compatible with His own words that "many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven," even though "the children of the kingdom" shall be cast out. The "salvation" to which the disciples referred in their question, and our Lord in His answer, was not that of the future eternity, but that of participation in the blessings of the Messianic kingdom.

If it had been necessary to interpret our Lord's words in the sense that the majority of mankind would perish, the Church would have drawn that conclusion from them. But she has not done so; she has not required of any of her children any such belief; and in all the Burial Services of all her communions has been led by a holy instinct or a divine inspiration to utter over the bodies of those whom she commits to the dust the language of an inextinguishable hope.

Yet it was necessary for me to repudiate as not being of faith a conclusion which so many of all schools are now as anxious as myself to repudiate, because the opinion has not only been again and again asserted, but is even now forced upon Christian people as though it were an article of the Christian creed.

A few passages, chosen from the writings of great teachers in different ages, will suffice to show that the doom of the majority to endless torment has been a common theme for Christian teaching.

As to the opinion of the Fathers, it may be gathered from the collection of their testimonies by Foggini in

[1] Matt. vii. 13.

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1759, the very title of whose book was "the wonderful agreement (*mira consensio*) of the Fathers as to the fewness of the adult faithful who could be saved."[1] Estius, a very high authority, said that "there was not one Father that had held a different opinion."[2]

St. Chrysostom in his Twenty-fourth Homily on the Acts, preaching at Antioch, said, "How many, think you, are there in our city who will be saved? It is a terrible truth which I am about to utter, but yet I will utter it. Among so many thousands a hundred cannot be found who will be saved, and even about them I doubt." Now Antioch was the third city of the Empire, the city in which disciples were first called Christians, and it must have contained some five hundred thousand inhabitants. What then in St. Chrysostom's opinion was the proportion between the saved and the lost? It was (if we press his words) that perhaps one in each five thousand might be saved!

Writing on the "great multitude which no man could number" (Rev. vii. 9), *Cornelius à Lapide*, the eminent commentator, says, "From what has

[1] Foggini, who died in 1783, was Librarian of the Vatican. His book, of which with difficulty I procured a copy after these pages were written, is very disappointing. The title is *Patrum ecclesiae de paucitate adultorum fidelium Salvandorum si cum reprobandis fidelibus conferantur, mira consensio asserta et demonstrata.* He quotes none of the authorities here adduced, except the one from St. Chrysostom. He quotes many passages, and among them some from Origen and Gregory of Nazianzus (who both leaned to Universalism!). But in almost every passage the argument consists merely of an appeal to Matt. xx. 16, xxii. 14. "Many are called, but few chosen," or the "broad and narrow way," Matt. vii. 13, Luke xiii. 23, 24. But obviously these texts are misinterpreted. They apply to present facts (*οἱ σωζόμενοι*), and neither exclude the possibility of repentance, nor decide the ultimate issues of the future. By declining to answer the question of the disciples, the Lord rebuked all self-righteous eschatologies, and furnished the strongest contrast to the language of 2 Esdras ix. 15-16. "There are many more of those that perish than of those which shall be saved; like as a wave is greater than a drop." Though but few of the "called" be in the highest sense "chosen," they may yet enjoy the blessing and peace of God in a lower degree, and may even become themselves "the chosen" in due time.

[2] Est. *M. Sent., Lib.* 1, *Dist.* 40. The remark is not true.

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been said we may estimate that in the end of the world the total number of all the saints and elect who have ever lived anywhere in any age will make up some hundred millions: the number of the reprobate will however be far greater, which will come to not only hundreds, but even thousands of millions. For often out of a thousand men, *nay even out of ten thousand, scarcely one is saved.*"[1]

Cornelius says elsewhere that "a crowd of men sink daily to Tartarus as dense as the falling snows."[2]

In the *Elucidarium*, often printed with St. Anselm's works, the Disciple asks: "Quid sentis de militibus?" and the answer is, "*Pauci Boni*. . . Quam spem habent mercatores? M. *Parvam*. . . Quid sentis de variis artificibus? M. *Paene omnes pereunt*. . . Habent spem joculatores? M. *Nullam*," and so on. The only persons to whom wider hope is allowed, are husbandmen, infants, and idiots! *De variis laicorum statibus.—Elucid.* ii. 17.

In 1554 *Curio* published a once famous book, *De Amplitudine Beati Regni*, in which he maintained the salvability of the heathen, and that the saved would in number exceed the lost. But "the doctrine was deemed so dangerous that the Senate of Basle refused to allow him to publish the work, and the first edition was printed surreptitiously."[3] The book caused him much trouble and persecution; and all his hopeful estimates were indignantly rejected by Recupito in his *Sacrarium* (1620), and by Vicars in his *Pusillus Grex* (1627).

[1] "Reproborum vero longe major erit turba, quae plures non tantum centenos, sed et millenos milliones efficiet, saepe enim ex mille hominibus, immo ex decem millibus, vix una salvatur."—CORN. LAPIDE, *in Apoc.* vii. 9.

[2] "Quam densi hieme flocci nivis cadunt ex aere, tam densa hominum turba quotidie descendit ad Tartara."—*Id.* on Num. xiv. 36. Foggini quotes the defence of a similar opinion by St. Nilus Calaber, p. 88.

[3] Schelhorn, *Amoen. Lit.* xii. 592-627. See references to sermons in Darwin's *Cyclop.* on Matt. xx. 16, xxii. 14.

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Du Moulin, a History Professor at Oxford, published a book in 1680 on the *Number of the Elect*, of which part of the title was "proving plainly from Scripture"—and let us observe in passing what a most astonishing variety of doctrines, utterly irreconcilable with each other, are, in the opinions of their propounders, "proved plainly from Scripture"—"that not one in a hundred thousand (nay, probably not one in a million), from Adam down to our time, shall be saved." Yet not even Du Moulin went sufficiently far for some of his readers. They taxed him with the crime of not having excluded all Papists from salvation, and he apologised for his laxity by the magnanimous remark that "he would not condemn St. Bernard to hell for having believed Purgatory."[1]

I have before me the curious book of Recupito, *De Numero Praedestinatorum et Reproborum* (Paris, 1664), of which I found a copy in the Archbishop's library at Lambeth. In the first chapter he argues that the number of the elect is fixed and definite. In the second he quotes the view of those who held that the number of the lost did not exceed that of the saved. He does not stop to argue the question generally. He at once assumes as an axiom that for 6,000 years none but Jews could have been saved, and that now none could be possibly saved outside the pale of the Church; so that countless millions of Mohammedans, Gentiles, and heretics are calmly disposed of with the oracular remark that "their damnation is certain." The question thus reduces itself to "the faithful." *Counting baptised infants*, he admits that, of Christians, *perhaps* the majority may be saved, and so confines the question to the adult faithful. In favour of the salvation of the greater number of the adult faithful, he refers to the *Rosa Aurea* of Sylvester; to Lorinus on Ps. lxxxviii. 14, and to Fr. Luarius, *De Praedestinatione*, lib. v., and

[1] See Professor Abbot, Appendix to *Alger*, p. 956.

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to the strange texts which they seem to have applied to this conclusion. He then quotes John Damascene, and alludes to the notions that redeemed men would take the place of the "third part of the angels" who had fallen; that most women are saved; that many who have sinned repent, and that God is full of compassion. He adduces the sentence of Tertullian, "If the majority perish, how is the perfect goodness defended which, in that case, for the most part, is inefficient, yielding to perdition, sharing with destruction?" Then he speaks of the physical size of the place of torment, being apparently as much puzzled as William of Auvergne[1] was to know "how hell could hold all the damned, since the number of the lost is to be so excessive." Recupito, however, at once gives his opinion that these arguments as well as that from the efficacy of the blood of Christ, and from the innumerable number of the martyrs, do not lend any probability to the opinion, which, he says, is "better suited to our desires than to the truth."[2]

Accordingly he proceeds to quote a host of theologians in favour of the opinion that most men are doomed to perdition: namely, Lyranus, Maldonatus, Cajetan, Bellarmine, Fasolus, Aluarez, Ruiz, Smising, Drexel, Lorinus, Molina, Thomas Aquinas, and Abulensis,—setting aside the remark of Vasquez, that it is a point on which we cannot be certain, because "to God alone is known the number of His elect."

He proceeds to prove this thesis to his own satisfaction. 1. From Scripture—quoting Is. ii. 4, xxii., xxv., 1 Cor. ix., x., and some twelve other passages, of which the great majority are as irrelevant as they could possibly be. He also argues, if argument it

[1] "Qualiter infernus capiet omnes damnatos."—GUL. ALVERN. *De Retrib. Sanctorum*, i. (See *Hist. Lit. de la France*, xviii. 370.)

[2] "Accommodata cupiditati magis quam veritati, optando potius exitu quam sperando."—RECUPITO, *De Num. Praed.* p. 8.

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may be called, from the fact that only two of the first generation of Israelites entered Canaan; from the 144,000 only of Rev. vii. 4;[1] from the eight souls only saved from the Deluge; from the shape of the ark; from the burning of Sodom; from the salvation of Rahab alone in Jericho; from the 300 of Gideon; from the fact that only one was healed at the Pool of Bethesda; from the fact that out of sixty wives, eighty concubines, and numberless others, Solomon only loved one—and so forth. The bare enumeration of these, and the argument derived from them, will at least serve to show how hollow and how fantastic—not to say preposterous—were most of the bases on which this awful superstructure of ignorant and perverted inference was supposed to rest.

He next adduces the opinion of the Fathers, and quotes in his favour St. Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St. Gregory. Then he tells us, from the Abbot Nilus, a revelation to St. Simeon Stylites that scarcely one soul was saved out of 10,000, and the vision of a bishop, referred to by Trithemius in his *Chronicon*, about A.D. 1160, in which a hermit appeared to him, and said that at the hour of his death 3,000 others had died, and the only one saved among them was St. Bernard of Clairvaux, and three who went to purgatory. He further adduces another vision of a preacher who says that 60,000 stood with him before God's bar, and all except three were condemned to hell; and yet another of a Parisian master, who appeared to his bishop, announcing that he had been damned, and added that "so many souls were daily thrust down to hell that he could scarcely believe there were so many men in the

[1] It is needless to point out the futility of this argument. It tells the other way. Being a thousand multiplied by the square of twelve, it is simply meant as a symbol of an absolutely consummate number, not to speak of the "innumerable multitude" in verse 9.

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world." Indeed he asked if the world still existed? For he had seen so many tumbling into the abyss that he thought that none could remain alive.

He proceeds, in the fifth chapter, to show the reasonableness (!) of his view from the difficulty of the means of salvation in consequence of vicious habits; of the hatred and fraud of demons; from the vast multitude of demons, each human being having one set apart for himself; from their persecutions; from the strictness of the final judgment; from death-bed scenes; from the Archangel's balance of sins and virtues; from the prevalence of self-love; from the frequency of backsliding; and (among yet other reasons) because good priests are so few, and therefore that, *à fortiori*, most ordinary men will perish.[1]

And so the book proceeds, and the author grinds out his hard theological dogma—questioning the validity of any deathbed repentance, minimizing any grain of comfort from the case of the penitent thief, and cheapening away all counter arguments: and, as is so common a phenomenon with all books of this kind, doing all this without a sigh, without one expression of pity for the lost; without seeming to realize the hideous fate to which he is dooming his brethren for whom Christ died; calmly and cheerfully hugging his own plank of fancied security amid the flaming deluge, and not thinking it worth while to waste one word of regret that the whole object of the Atonement should thus be frustrated, and that God should thus glean but a few ears out of the beaten, blighted, mildewed harvest of the world!

It is needless to prove that this has continued to be the popular opinion. It is very rarely that in

[1] Jer. *Ep. ad Damasum.* "Ecce mundus undique fervet sacerdotibus; et tamen tam sunt rarissimi sacerdotes ut vix e centum bonus reperiatur unus." St. Chrysostom says that "he thought that not many priests would be saved" (*Hom.* iii. in *Act. Ap.*). St. Pachomius said the same of monks (*Vit.* S. Pachom. by Dionysius Exig. *c.* 45). Comp. Bellarmine, *De gemitu Columbae*, ii. 6.

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common religious literature I have found even a trace of any other. Dr. Pusey and Mr. Oxenham seem to fancy that the opinion is in some way connected with Calvinism. Alas! it is centuries older than Calvinism; it is immensely wider than the limits of Calvinistic Churches. Massillon, who wrote the terrible sermon *Sur le petit Nombre des Élus*, was no Calvinist, nor were multitudes of those divines whose sermons on the "little flock" may be found enumerated in Darling's *Cyclopædia*. Nay, there is a terrible sermon of Dr. Pusey's own, "On the Fewness of the Saved," in the first volume of his *Parochial Sermons*,[1] and it will, I think, be difficult for any one who reads it to arrive at any other conclusion than this—that the saved are —in the opinion of the writer—only a minority of a minority out of a minority.

How it is that Dr. Pusey can still hold out a possible hope for suffering humanity we shall see in the next chapter; only let me say now that if all the terrible conjectures here recorded were indeed matters of faith, how could any one think of the race of man without either hard defiance, or agonies of despair? How could he brazen his heart to think with calm indifference, with revolting self-congratulation, of this awful mass of life doomed to welter hereafter in the hopeless and unendurable abyss?

Even a heathen could exclaim—

"Sunt lacrimae rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt."

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[1] Pusey, *Paroch. Sermons*, i. 123.

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CHAPTER VI.

IS THERE NO SUCH THING AS A TERMINABLE PUNISHMENT BEYOND THE GRAVE?

"Proficiscere, anima Christiana, de hoc mundo!"

"Go forth upon thy journey, Christian soul!
Go from this world! go in the name of God!"
NEWMAN, *Dream of Gerontius.*

"Sanabiles fecit nationes terrae."—*Wisd.* i. 14.

I NOW come to the third point respecting which I wished an answer as to whether it was, or was not, a mere popular accretion to the doctrine of the Catholic Church respecting future retribution,—namely, "that it is a doom passed irreversibly at the moment of death on all who die in a state of sin." The clause has been misunderstood, because I had not thought it necessary to define the phrase. By "a state of sin," I meant a state in which there have been no visible fruits of repentance. My question meant, "Is it a matter of faith that there is no disciplinary or purgatorial condition in the Intermediate State through which sinful and erring souls, who have not visibly repented, may still be reached by the grace of God?"

In the only sense which I attached to these words, Dr. Pusey agrees with me; he does not hold, he

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declares that the Catholic Church does not hold, and that it has never held, the doctrine which I repudiate, if by "state of sin," I only mean such a state as excludes any *visible* presence of God's grace in the heart.[1]

In point of fact the entire scope of his argument points (except in one particular which is outside the subject) to conclusions which are exactly analogous with my own. If (as I have already said in a letter to the *Guardian*) he holds that most men do not die in a state of such sin as excludes them for ever from the presence of God, and also that some purification of imperfect souls is possible in the world to come, he holds all that I ask. All that I ever desired in this matter was the liberation of men's minds from fearful and fallible *inferences* as to the future, which I believe to be unwarranted by the voice of God whether in Scripture or in the heart of man.

Dr. Pusey, in his *Eirenicon* (p. 192), speaks about "a soul *which here has had no longings for God*, even if the man himself should die in a state of grace": but no popular teaching which I have ever heard would (apart from some visible repentance) have admitted that such a soul would still die "in a state of grace." The Romish doctrine of purgatory has only seemed to many minds a more merciful doctrine than that of the popular teaching because it does admit an ultimate hope for grievously imperfect souls. "As if," says Dr. Pusey, "the English Church held that any whom the Roman Church assigns to purgatory would be cast into hell!" I reply, as regards the English Church, No! but as regards the only logical inference to be drawn from the diatribes of hundreds of her teachers, "yes!" I answer further that over considerable portions of Roman Catholic countries

[1] Dr. Pusey would, I suppose, say that an irreversible *doom* is passed; but that the doom may be to a terminable, and purifying punishment; a view which does not differ very materially from my own.

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it is believed that the notion of purgatory has all but superseded that of hell.

If I had seen that there was any possibility of ambiguity in my words, I would have said that what I believe to be no part of Catholic truth was the notion that the doom to *endless torments* is passed irreversibly at death on all who have not attained to a visible state of grace, *i.e.* who are not yet sanctified, not yet even approximately victorious over manifold temptations.

The particular phrase which I used was due to the intense impression once made on my mind by a remark of Jeremy Taylor, that "A state of sin cannot be a state of grace."

I think that this explanation will make my meaning clear. I did not wish to deny that it is "a matter of faith" that they who are *utterly* reprobate, who have utterly extinguished all the grace of God in their hearts (if such there be in this world), would pass from earth to an irreparable loss. I did not even mean — as a multitude of passages in my sermons were surely sufficient to prove—that a man's ultimate destiny is not decided at death so far as the results of his earthly life are concerned. But what I did mean was the doctrine that men do not pass direct from life to hell or to heaven, but to a place in which God's merciful dealings with them are not yet necessarily finished; where His mercy may still reach them in the form, if not of probation (for on that subject I have never dogmatized), yet of preparation. That there is this progressive development of the Divine work of grace in the soul is expressly stated by St. Paul in the passage, "That he who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ." St. Paul is there speaking to the members of an entire Church; no doubt he regards them all as being ideally God's saints; but he does so with the

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full knowledge that multitudes fell grievously, and even terribly, short of that ideal. And here comes in the truth that, as even saints are not perfect, but are still sinners, so even sinners are very rarely—perhaps never—fixed, finished, and incurable in sin, when seized by their mortal sickness. If there is no such thing as a perfectly good man, so it may be doubted whether there be such a thing as a perfectly and irredeemably bad man. By the time that the great Day of Judgment has come there will be, in some form, as the tremendous imagery of Scripture leads us to believe, some division of mankind into good and bad—sheep on the right, and kids (ἐρίφια) on the left; but ere that day has come, and in Hades, there must have been many a change before it is easy to distinguish between the best of the evil and the lowest of the good.

I think that a few instances will illustrate my meaning.

1. During the last few years, in my work as a parochial clergyman, I have been called to stand by many death-beds, and to direct and solace—so far as man can do so—the last thoughts of those who are passing away from earthly things, and who have thought but little of any other.

Those scenes have left on my mind the deep conviction that a death-bed very rarely makes any observable difference in the general habit of mind of the dying. What happens most frequently is that physical weakness or mental unconsciousness come on, before either the sufferers or those about them distinctly recognize that the summons has gone forth. They think that they shall "pull through it this time," as I have often been told by those who had hardly a day to live. Often the end comes on very rapidly, before the perilous, or at least before the hopeless, character of the disease has been realised. Often, again, death is so slow in its approach that

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there always remains a hope in the mind of the sick person that he or she may yet have many days to live. And very frequently I find the strongest possible disinclination to speak of religious subjects, or the habit of fencing off all approach to anything like a heart-searching intercourse, either by silence, or by monosyllabic answers, or by vague generalities, or by a transparent effort to change the subject,—and that too even when the sufferer is perfectly aware that his life has been openly sinful, and that the end is near. It is rarely indeed that the sick do not welcome the prayer offered for them at their bedsides, or that they are disinclined to listen to the passage from the Holy Book; and sometimes, even when they have not been communicants for years, the desire is renewed in them, to receive once more the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. But how have these men and women often been living up to the last day, and week, and month, or year of their active life? Not always, not perhaps very often, as flagrant criminals in the world's sight, but yet how far from even the lowest Christian standard.[1] I will not take the very common case of drunkards, or of those who have been dishonest, or blasphemers, or unclean; but how often is it the case that the dying person has been utterly careless and indifferent; not praying for himself, or hardly ever praying; not attending, or scarcely ever attending, the House of God; not receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; not living, and not earnestly trying to live, in the love and fear of God, or in any high fulfilment of the duty to our neighbour; guilty of sins of impurity, of ignorance, and even of malice. Yet they have not been *wholly* bad. They have been perhaps kind fathers; they have been perhaps, on the whole, faithful husbands; they have been trustworthy, perhaps, in the main task committed to them. Even the worst of them have

[1] "Rari quippe boni."—JUV. *Sat.* xiii. 26; AUSON. *Id.* xvi. 1, 2.

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shown some redeeming quality; some eyes have wept for them tears of sincere regret. But many even of the best of them cannot be said to have fulfilled any one of the *deepest* obligations of the religious life. Not one, even of their friends, would have dreamt of speaking of them as "religious," or as "godly," or even as "good Christian men." And, so far as I have seen, they die, in nine cases out of ten, exactly as they have lived. In general they show no vital sign of sorrow for sin, no consciousness even of their own guilt in God's sight, no sense of their utter neglect of many sacred duties, no faith in Christ, no dread whatever of appearing before the judgment seat of God—absolutely nothing of that state of mind which we have been taught to regard as the sign of true repentance. And so they pass away.[1] And if the cedar of Paradise is shaken, what shall happen to the desert reed?[2]

2. Or take another case. In these our recent wars, as in all our wars, many young soldiers and officers have been killed. Among these have been some whom I have known well; and of these some have differed in no way from multitudes of their fellows. They have lived the ordinary life of men similarly circumstanced. Gallant they have been, and generous, and faithful to their military duties, and intensely dear to their friends and families; and often they have met their death as brave men should, facing the enemy, or trying to relieve the wounded or the

[1] Dr. Pusey (*Eirenicon*, p. 196), in answer to Mr. Wilson's difficulty about "those who die in ignorance, like thousands of the London poor," asks, "Who ever said or suggested that they would necessarily be lost?" And in his *What is of Faith* he ranks them with the heathen, and calls London "in all probability one of the largest heathen cities in the world." It is an easy solution of the difficulty: but I, who have seen many die in the lowest and poorest ranks of London life, know that most of them have, at some time or other of their lives, been under religious instruction; they are anything but heathen in absence of mere knowledge of the main facts of the Christian religion.

[2] St. Gregory Magn.

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imperilled. And some of them have been but youths, and their country thinks of them with pity and with pride. But had you asked them five minutes before the sword-blow or the musket-shot stretched them on the sod, whether they had lived holy, or even religious, or even serious lives, or even lives free from grave faults and sins, even as men reckon sins, some of them would have been the first to say no. And, in the course of that providence which orders the life and death of man, these frank and gallant youths are—

> "Cut off even in the blossom of their sin,
> Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd;
> No reckoning made, but sent to their account
> With all their imperfections on their head."

What is the common teaching respecting such as these? Is it that all who live thus go straight to heaven? Will any one say without shrinking—will not any one blush for very shame to say—that they pass from hence to an endless hell? And yet have we not heard from earliest childhood the teaching, "*a filo vita, a vita mors, a morte pendet aeternitas*"?

3. Take another case. I have stood, not once or twice only, by the bedside of dying boys. And often, in their case too, unconsciousness and death have come on suddenly and unexpectedly; and without so much as a suspicion that there has been need on their part for any special preparation they have been called into the presence of God. They have differed in no respect from other boys. They have gone away from the life of boys as the lives of boys are at our public schools. And in some cases it would have been wholly untrue to say that they were religious boys, or that their lives had been in any sense holy lives, or that their sins had not been like the sins of their fellows, or that they had lived in the spirit of prayer, or that they had been unselfish, or keenly

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alive to duty, or wholly obedient; or that their character had been free from very serious stains of one kind or other; or that their influence had been in any sense markedly for good:—still less would they have been specially spoken of as servants of God or followers of Christ. They were living, I say, in many cases, the common life of boys of their age; and in the very middle of that common life—whatever it was—they were, without any preparation, summoned hence. If any ordinary boy, at any ordinary school, suddenly touched by the finger of death, is so living that he may be sure of—to use the common phrase—"going straight to heaven," then these boys who have died would have gone to heaven; not otherwise. But will any one say that, if the daily teaching of all religious teachers be true, ordinary men and ordinary boys, living the ordinary life of men and boys, are fit to go straight to heaven? And yet will any one dare to say—as I suppose in the middle ages men would scarcely have hesitated to say—that these, many of them with all their faults, all their habitual faults, all their serious, unbroken faults,—their faults to all human appearance scarcely realised by themselves in their true heinousness, and to all human appearance in no way repented of—will any one now dare to say that these, so beloved, with so many good qualities, with so many germs in them of undeveloped virtue, will be never changed, or made better, or relieved from torment, but will go straight hence under the irrevocable doom to an endless hell?[1]

I know not whether teachers in general would have said of any of these that they die "in a state of sin"; but I did not mean by that term *in a state wholly evil.* And I am very sure that many, whose lives have been externally far more serious than those of

[1] "Aeternitas est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio."—BOETHIUS.

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any of these, would still consider themselves so sinful, so stained with unsubdued infirmities, so little victorious over grave besetting sins, so conscious that they had never lived and were not then living as God would have us live, so very far off from all conscious and vital union with Christ, that, unless the mere fact of death make a difference, they could look to the future with but little hope. Many—especially of the best of them—would say with the unhappy Cowper—

> "No voice divine the storm allayed,
> No light propitious shone,
> When, snatched from all effectual aid,
> We perished, each alone:
> But I beneath a rougher sea,
> And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he."

Not many years ago there was living a poet who was a man of most tender, affectionate, and beautiful character, but who was—the plain truth must be spoken—a victim of drink. And though he was never able to conquer the habit, he yet wrote of himself on the fly-leaf of his Bible—

> "When I received this volume small
> My days were barely seventeen,
> When it was hoped I should be all
> Which once, alas! I might have been.
>
> "And now my years are thirty-five,
> And every mother hopes her lamb,
> And every happy child alive,
> May never be what now I am.
>
> . . . . .
>
> "Of what men are, and why they are
> So weakly, wofully beguiled,
> Much have I learnt, but better far,
> I know my soul is reconciled."

Will any one stand by the grave of one who has thus fallen, even if in this life he has never wholly recovered, and say that he shall never inherit the kingdom of heaven? Without repentance, no: but will any man say that a repentance imperfect here—

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a repentance not so strong as wholly to conquer the awful physical craving—may not by God's mercy be consummated beyond the grave?

Some, similarly situated, knowing their own weakness, knowing the degradation into which sin has brought them, knowing the plague of their own hearts, have not dared to entertain such a hope respecting themselves. One of the greatest writers and deepest thinkers of the last generation, enslaved similarly by the spell of an artificial crave, said in the depth of his self-abasement, that he could positively welcome with rapture the doctrine that the soul of man could cease to be. Yet will not mankind refuse to condemn so good a man to endless agonies? will they not judge him more leniently than he dared to judge himself? Will they not believe that in this tenderness of judgment they do but reflect the mercy of the Merciful?

And is it then *to make light of sin* if we decline to believe that such as these, though they have not shown any visible repentance, have passed at the moment of death to an irreversible agony? We preach exactly what Scripture preaches—that sin is death; that the soul that sinneth it shall die; that we shall eat the fruit of our works; that both here and hereafter there is a punishment for the violation of God's laws; that such punishment is inevitable; that it works in the form of natural consequences; that the sinful soul so long as it loves its sin cannot see God. But we preach also the forgiveness of sins by the blood of Christ; and we believe that the seeds of true repentance may here be unripened, may to human eyes be invisible, and that yet they may be brought to perfection by God's love and mercy beyond the grave.

Now, I spoke of deaths like these when I spoke of dying "in a state of sin." I meant the deaths of those who die in the very midst of that ordinary life

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of men in which, as we see it in all the world around us, good and evil are not locked in deadly contest, but are lying down flat together, side by side. And do not let my question be met by a pretended indignation that such questions should be asked at all. For they have been asked a million times, and if we are to understand the ways of our God towards us, and towards those whom we love, we must not have *two* answers to them—one, an answer in terrible accordance with what men profess as their formal theology, and the other the natural voice of the best feelings of that human heart by which we live. Nor, again, let such questionings be met by vague facing-both-ways talk about God's "uncovenanted mercies," unless the possibility and the reality of these "uncovenanted mercies" be distinctly recognised as also forming a part of our belief. Let us not go on all our lives professing to teach one thing, and then, at the first touch of pressure, recoiling at once from our own conclusions. On this subject mankind will no longer be silenced by usurped authority, nor mocked by empty verbiage which "steers through the channel of no meaning, between the Scylla and Charybdis of yes and no."

Now Dr. Pusey is absolutely at one with me in refusing to say a word as to the irreversible doom to endless torments of those "who die in a state of sin," in such a sense of the words as I have here explained. In the *Contemporary Review*,[1] in language as careful as I could make it, I stated the essence of my view as consisting in the doctrine "that, even if, in the short space of human life, the soul have not yet been weaned from sin, there may be a hope of recovery, a possibility of amendment, if not after the Last Judgment, yet at least in some disembodied condition beyond the grave." I can see no perceptible difference between this view and what Dr. Pusey says,

[1] xxxii. p. 571.

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that "a change in the soul, which would be short of the change between rejecting God and accepting Him, might be believed by any one who yet believes in the everlasting loss of those who finally rejected Him."[1]

Dr. Pusey here states his belief, which is, of course, mine also, for it is that of the Church Catholic, that there is an Intermediate State; and that God's dealings with the soul do not end with this life, but continue during that Intermediate State. He holds that many who die imperfect, unvictorious, undelivered as yet from the chain of even grievous sins, do not at death pass irreversibly to an endless state even of loss, much less of torment—but that they are prepared for admission hereafter into life and blessedness.

But how does he arrive at this conclusion? I will confess that I read these pages of his book with surprise. He holds with Dr. Newman (and I am most willing to accept the view), that "there are innumerable degrees of grace and sanctity among the saved," and that many who "die and make no sign," may yet "die, one and all, with the presence of God's grace, and the earnest of eternal life, however invisible to man, already in their hearts."[2] But to show why the Church has never sanctioned any dogma as to the doom of the vast majority of mankind, he dwells on the possibility that they may have faith and repentance, though we know it not.

"How do we or can we know," he asks, "what souls do not die in a state of grace?" Well, I should be deeply thankful to be permitted to believe, in thousands of cases, that a sinner died "in a state of grace," although no sign of it was visible; but then it can only be said that "a state of grace" must to human eyes look perilously like "a state of sin."

Dr. Pusey, for instance, supposes that there may be repentance, and therefore salvation, even in the case of one dying in the commission of a deadly sin. He

[1] *What is of Faith*, p. 27. [2] *Id.* p. 12.

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speaks of one mortally wounded in a duel; of an unbeliever "who had lately been inculcating unbelief, and who rose up from an adulteress' bed to fall back and die in the arms of the adulteress."[1] He speaks of the possible repentance of Ahab, of Absalom, of Solomon. He says that "we know not whether it was an agony of remorse and repentance by which Ananias died, and so was saved, though the temporal judgment of God was irreversible." He speaks of the possible repentance of Nebuchadnezzar, of Antiochus Epiphanes, "picture as he is of the Anti-christ." He speaks of some woman who was a drunkard, a liar, a murderess, and yet to whom, though she died on the scaffold, "God threw open the portals of mercy for eternity."[2] He tells of the evangelical clergyman of the very large parish of Wolverhampton, who said that he had never repeated, in the Burial Service, the words "as our hope is that this our brother doth," without having some measure of hope; though this view of death-bed repentance—"of what God might do for the soul in these last moments, even when it would hold communication with none but Him"—was entirely unknown to him. He quotes Père Ravignan as saying that "In the soul, at the last moment of its passage, on the threshold of eternity, there occur, doubtless, Divine mysteries of justice, but above all, of mercy and love"; and he himself uses the remarkable words, "What God does for the soul when the eye is turned up in death and shrouded, the frame stiffened, every limb motionless, every power of expression gone, is one of the secrets of the Divine compassion."

I confess that I should not myself use this language; that I should not myself lay stress on the possibility of the whole work of grace being thus accomplished in the soul—as in the case of the adulterer and the murderer—in the last agonies of death. God can

[1] *Id.* p. 12. [2] *Id.* p. 15.

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indeed "in a short time fulfil a long time,"[1] and Christ, in His great mercy, has indeed given us the record of what He said to the dying robber on the cross; but it is the only instance in all those long millenniums which Scripture affords us of the efficacy of a death-bed repentance—one that we might not despair; one only, that we might not presume. "We know not what God may do in one agony of loving penitence for one who accepts His last grace in that almost sacrament of death."[2] Men have always clung to this hope, and have told such legends as the famous one about—

> "Between the saddle and the ground
> I mercy sought and mercy found."

Few passages in Dante are better known than that in the *Purgatorio*, in which he makes Buonconte narrate his death :—

> "I am Buonconte, once of Montefeltro.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> I came, I was sore wounded in the throat,
> Flying on foot, and bloodying the plain,
> I lost the power of sight here, and my voice
> Died with the name of Mary: on that spot
> I fell, and all alone my body lay.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> God's angel seized on me, and he of hell
> Cried out, O thou of Heaven, why dost thou rob me?
> Thou claimest to bear off his part eternal,
> For one small tear which rescues him from me."[3]

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[1] *Wisd.* iv. 13. [2] Dr. Pusey, *Eirenicon*, p. 193.

[3] *Purgatory*, v. st. 33-35 (as translated by F. Pollok). The original is :—

> "Io fui di Montefeltro, io son Buonconte.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Arrivo io forato nella gola,
> Fuggendo a piede, e sanguinando il piano,
> Quivi perdei la vista, e la parola,
> Nel nome del Maria, fini e quivi,
> Caddi, e rimasse la mia carne sola.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> L'Angel di Dio mi prese, e quel d'Inferno
> Gridava: O tu dal ciel perchè mi privi?
> Tu te ne porte di costui l' eterno,
> Per una lagrimetta che 'l mi toglie."

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But is it not somewhat strange—does it accord with all that we have heard from childhood about the futility of hoping for a change at death—to make this possibility the turning-point of an argument to show why the Church has never taught the perdition of the majority? Can we seriously suppose that it is "*per una lagrimetta*," and one cry uttered at the last gasp that the majority are to be saved?

"Repentance," says Archbishop Wake,[1] "cannot be true, except there be a true *love of God*, and an utter *detestation of sin*, and a *hearty contrition* that we have ever committed it, and *steadfast resolution* never to fall any more into it, and then improved in *actual sincere endeavour*, what in us lies, to abound in good works, and fulfil that duty which God requires of us."

While, then, I should be far from denying the merciful supposition of this possible repentance in any human being, even when there has been no true outward sign of it, the grounds on which I should shrink from ever conjecturing the doom of any individual sinner, would not be this possibility, but rather the more general grounds of hope that there is an intermediate state between death and judgment; that there the sinful and stained souls may be prepared for better things; that the "pain of loss," even of endless loss, may be mitigated into something like submissive contentment; that God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor His ways as our ways; that the Lord will not always chide, neither keepeth He His anger for ever; that "He will not contend for ever, neither will He be always wroth, for the spirit would fail before Him, and the souls which He has made."[2]

Of the destiny of the good and holy souls no Christian has any doubt.

[1] *Discourse of Purgatory*, p. 35. The italics are in the original. See, too, Bishop Jeremy Taylor's sermon on *The Inefficacy of a Death-bed Repentance.*

[2] Is. lvii. 16.

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Of the destiny of souls hideously wicked, abominably base, abnormally depraved—of the very few men who have shown themselves to be beast-like in their degradation, or fiend-like in their cruelty—we can say nothing. Respecting such, Hope itself must at least be silent and lay her hand upon her lip. They are those of whom Pagans and Christians alike spoke as "incurable";[1] only, even here, Olympiodorus the commentator upon Plato, did not shrink from saying, that though incurable in themselves, "they may conceivably become curable by some external impulse."[2]

Our question, however, does not concern either the holy or the absolutely depraved. It concerns the destiny of the vast multitude, the overwhelming majority. They are not saint-like, but very imperfect and sinful; yet they are by no means wholly evil; by no means without sweet affections, and generous impulses, and noble qualities. They have not loved evil, or sold themselves to it. It might even be said to the Evil Spirit respecting them—

> "Und steh' beschämt, wenn Du bekennen musst:
> Ein guter Mensch in seinem dunkeln Drange
> Ist sich des rechten Weges wohl bewusst."

What shall be the fate of these intermediate natures?[3] They are not undefiled in the way; they have not walked wholly in the Law of the Lord; their repentance has not been perfect; their very tears have needed washing. They are not in such a state that they can enter at once into the purity and

[1] τοὺς καταλαμβανομένους ἐν τῇ ἀνιάτῳ κακίᾳ.—ORIG. *C. Cels.* viii. p. 403. οἱ δ' ἂν τὰ ἔσχατα ἀδικήσωσι καὶ διὰ τοιαῦτα ἀδικήματα ἀνιάτοι γένωνται, ἐκ τούτων τὰ παραδείγματα γίγνεται καὶ οὗτοι μὲν οὐκέτι ὀνίνανται, ἅτε ἀνιάτοι ὄντες.—PLAT. *Gorg.* § 171.

[2] ὡς ἑτεροκίνητοι σώζονται in Plat. *Gorg. l. c.*

[3] οἱ μὲν ἂν δόξωσι μέσως βεβιωκέναι, respecting whom Plato says that they are absolved by torments. καὶ ἐκεῖ οἰκοῦσί τε καὶ καθαιρόμενοι τῶν τε ἀδικημάτων διδόντες δίκας ἀπολύονται εἴ τίς τι ἠδίκησε. — EUSEB. *Praep. Evang.* xi. 38.

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peace of Heaven. There are in them elements of untruthfulness, and lukewarmness, and self-seeking, and mammon-worship, and impurity which would cast a shadow on the streets of the New Jerusalem; and they have been cut off suddenly in the very midst of their days. What will be "their own place" beyond the grave?

a. Some perhaps will say that, since they are not of the number of the Saints of God, since they have not been holy men, they will first suffer, and then be annihilated.

b. Some will say that having been born in sin, and having died in sin, they are destined to endless existence in misery of mind and body—"an existence the duration of which would be only commencing when it had lasted through a number of millenniums, denoted by lines of figures as numerous as the vibrating beams of light which extend from all the suns and stars of the firmament into the infinite darkness, even if these innumerable lines of figures should be multiplied into each other." And surely "this is a proposition which requires for its support something more solid than a few disputed 'texts' out of the English version, and which nothing short of absolute demonstration ought to persuade any man to embrace as from God."[1] There are thousands of men—men devout and learned—men of holy and humble heart—who have declared after life-long search that for them such demonstration is not to be found.

c. The Roman Church would answer that such souls pass into Purgatory. They would say with the Catechism of the Council of Trent "that there is a purgatory fire, in which the souls of the faithful" [and those of whom I have spoken, if they had lived and died in the rites of the Church, would not, I imagine, be excluded from the number of "the faithful"] "being tormented for a certain time, are

[1] Rev. E. White, *Life and Death*, p. 35.

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expiated, that so a passage may be opened for these into their eternal country, into which no defiled thing can enter." Among Romish Christians it is not a matter of faith where Purgatory is; nor whether its pains are material or immaterial; nor how long souls are there detained; but solely whether "there is a state of the dead, in which they shall be expiated by 'Temporary' punishment, and from which they may be freed or otherwise helped by the prayers of the Church." [1]

The mass of ordinary teachers, judging by their sermons and pamphlets, would, with terrible deliberateness, adopt the second of these views—namely, that such souls pass to an endless hell, and that too without the shadow of any possible mitigation.

But what would be the answer of many English Churchmen who can claim to speak with the authority of competent thought and competent knowledge? Would it not be that though they cannot accept the Romish doctrine of purgatory with the admixture of all the conceptions which the word connotes [2]; though that doctrine is altogether too rigidly defined to admit of proof from revelation; though the "probatory fire" of which the earlier Fathers speak is rather the fire through which it was believed that all would pass at the Judgment Day than what the Roman Church usually understands by the fire of Purgatory; yet that in the Intermediate State

[1] Alex. Natalis. iv. 41.

[2] Romanists themselves were perfectly aware of the necessity for excluding these base admixtures. The decree on the subject passed in the twenty-fifth session of the Council of Trent expressly bids the bishops to banish from popular discourses "the more difficult and subtle questions, and those which do not conduce to edification, and from which often there is no increase of piety. Moreover," it says, "they do not permit uncertain matters, or those which have the appearance of falsity, to be published or handled. But those which tend to curiosity and superstition, or savour of base gain, let them prohibit as the scandal and offence of the faithful." It would have been well if the spirit of these wise cautions had exercised a deeper influence on Christian Eschatology.

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the condition of the souls of all except the absolutely reprobate admits of progress and improvement. While, therefore, we are not warranted in asserting that any fresh probation will be offered, or that the soul will have new trial-time, we are permitted to hope that God's mercy may reach them there, as it reaches many here, and that "man's destiny ends not with the grave."

Such an answer may be called vague, but it is only vague as on this subject the teachings of Scripture are themselves vague. It is therefore vague only from a feeling of humility and reverence. We do not wish to invade the regions which for some good purpose have been left mysterious and undefined. I, for one, have never wished to dogmatize on points respecting which there have been opinions so widely differing among Christian men. Nay, it has been my sole wish to repudiate as unwarrantable that popular dogmatism of which I have given many specimens, and which goes far beyond what is warranted by the true and sober interpretation of Scripture; far beyond what is required by the teaching of the Church.

It would have been better if religious teachers, from Augustine downwards, had imitated the deep reserve and reticence of the sacred writers, who would not speak when God was silent. It would have been better if St. Gregory the Great had never entered into the descriptions and speculations respecting Purgatory which have been subsequently reflected in so many thousands of books and sermons. Even in the little which Scripture does say respecting the state of the dead we are met by those apparently insoluble antinomies which meet us also in other regions of doctrine when they touch on transcendental truth; and these antinomies, joined with the awful silence of the dead, which God has not suffered to be broken during all these long

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millenniums, should be sufficient to warn us not to speak with coarse description, and rash dogma, and unwarranted detail on a theme respecting which the Church has said very little in her creeds and formularies. In dealing with the state of the dead she has confined herself to the most general principles, and she has not attempted to come to any rigid decision on opinions in which unanimity is impossible. The necessary truths on which she insists are few; in things doubtful she has left us at liberty; in all things she calls for charity.

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CHAPTER VII.

IS FUTURE RETRIBUTION NECESSARILY AND INVARIABLY ENDLESS?

"Wilt Thou not make, Eternal Source and Goal!
In Thy long years life's broken purpose whole,
And change to praise the cry of a Lost Soul?"

WHITTIER.

I NOW pass to the fourth point.

As to the first three, I have shown that Dr. Pusey, and with him the majority of our best divines, as well as of Roman Catholic divines, repudiate as fully as I have repudiated the necessity for believing as matters of faith (1) that there is a material hell; or, (2) that the majority of mankind must perish; or, (3) that no change will be possible in the condition of the dead who may die in an imperfect frame of mind. These points are therefore conceded, and I have only had to remove the verbal ambiguity attaching to one phrase ("those who die in a state of sin").

My object has been more than gained if I have succeeded in forcing upon the attention of the Church that the popular teaching still prevalent is *not* in accordance with true theological teaching; that it goes far beyond revealed truth; that it is mixed up with many dangerous accretions; that it constitutes a deadly hindrance to the spread of Christianity among the heathen, and to its acceptance in Christian

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countries by many men of high intellect and pure morals whom we should love to win over to the truth in Christ.

It is different with the fourth point. I said that "the supposition of the necessarily endless duration of hell for all who incur it," was also an accretion to the true doctrine. On this point Dr. Pusey takes his stand. To give up this belief would, he says, be "to give up part of that Faith which our Lord gave as a protection to all those who suffer for Him sooner than give up Himself." Yet on this point there is a difference between us so far only as this: I do not deny that punishment may for some souls be endless; but I do not agree with Dr. Pusey in thinking that this endlessness is a necessary matter of faith.

Dr. Pusey, since he too believes in *a punishment beyond the grave which will terminate*—a purgatorial punishment, — repudiates this fourth accretion in exactly the same sense as I do.

The apparent opposition between us is purely verbal. Dr. Pusey confines the word "hell" to the meaning "endless punishment"; to him therefore it would be a mere contradiction in terms to say that "hell" could ever end. If he gives this definition to hell, I of course agree with him. Whatever "hell" may be, I have said that the soul which never repents to the end will suffer to the end. But since the popular theology (to which alone I was alluding) attaches the name "hell" to *every* kind of punishment beyond the grave, it asserts *the impossibility of any terminable and purifying punishment.* I wished to repudiate this assertion, and so does Dr. Pusey. I meant to declare my hope that there is such a thing as a punishment beyond the grave—call it "purgatory" or what you will—which will not be endless. The divergence of our expressions only conceals a substantial identity in the views which we alike hold.

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Dr. Pusey would say:

I. I believe that some human beings pass away from this world under the doom to endless torments.

II. But I believe also—or at any rate I admit it to be a perfectly tenable opinion—that the majority of human beings will ultimately be saved.

III. Yet, since they die unfit for heaven, I believe that all who die unsanctified, and but imperfectly penitent, will pass hence into a state of punishment in which they will be prepared and purified for the presence of God.

Now as regards these three propositions I should adopt much the same views, but express them in different words, namely—

I. I cannot but fear, from one or two passages of Scripture, and from the general teaching of the Church, and from certain facts of human experience, that some souls may be ultimately lost;—that they will not be admitted into the Vision and the Sabbath of God.

II. I trust that by God's mercy, and through Christ's redemption, the majority of mankind will be ultimately saved.

III. Yet, since they die unfit for heaven—since they die in a state of imperfect grace—I believe that in some way or other, before the final judgment, God's mercy may reach them, and the benefits of Christ's atonement be extended to them beyond the grave.

This is, and always has been, *ex animo*, my belief and hope; and, as I think my whole book showed, this was exactly what I meant when I said that "eternal punishment," *i.e.* "punishment in the life to come," is not necessarily endless in duration to all who incur it.

But then it was said that while I denied Universalism, many of my arguments pointed in the direction of Universalism. I reply:—

i. That though I am neither an Universalist nor an

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"Annihilationist," I believe that both of these views have at all times been held by many good and faithful Christians; that neither of them is positively rejected by any formula of our Church; that neither of them cuts off those who hold them from the rights of full communion; and that both of them may be supported by arguments from Scripture which, though to me they are unconvincing, are not to be swept aside as impossible or absurd.

And, ii. That, as regards Universalism, although it cannot be held as a dogma, it is so far from being excluded *as a hope*, that it represents one of the apparent antinomies of Scripture which it was right to indicate. Dark as is the prospect of wicked men, awful as may seem to be their ultimate doom, it would yet be sinful and faithless to quench every apparent gleam of hope respecting their future lot which to some eyes has always seemed to be dimly discernible on the far horizon.

Would the Church for more than a thousand years have taught us to pray an absurd and a hopeless prayer? Yet the Church teaches us, all our lives long, to pray a prayer which I for one breathe more intensely than any other from the very depths of my heart,

"THAT IT MAY PLEASE THEE TO HAVE MERCY UPON ALL MEN,

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord."[1]

[1] "I embraced in my heart all that is called man, past, present, and future, times and nations, the dead, the damned, even Satan. I presented them all to God with the warmest wishes that He would have mercy upon all."—LAVATER, *ap. Alger*, p. 537.

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CHAPTER VIII.

JEWISH ESCHATOLOGY AT THE DAWN OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA.

"In diesem Punkt erklären sich die Talmudlehrer entschieden gegen die Annahme der Ewigkeit der Höllenstrafen."—HAMBURGER, *Talmudisches Wörterbuch*, s. v. "Hölle."

I HAVE now shown that, so far, there is in reality no controversy between myself and Dr. Pusey. It seems to me, and it has seemed to many others, that our views are essentially agreed; and that the apparent rift of difference between them is simply due to that mirage which is caused by the differing uses of words. This agreement is to me a very deep source of comfort and thankfulness; and I venture once more to offer to Dr. Pusey the expression of my gratitude both for the service which he has rendered to the Church by his book, and also for that Christian courtesy of tone which has enabled me to reply to him in friendly controversy, when it would have been impossible for me to answer others without stooping to a vain wrangling which I regard as unworthy and profitless.

At this point, then, it might well seem that all the most important part of my task is ended; but there still remain to be considered some collateral questions of history and exegesis, which do not indeed

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affect matters of faith, but which yet have an important bearing on the problems of the future life, and respecting which Dr. Pusey thinks that I am mistaken.

One of the most important of these is what I called my "palmary argument,"—that our word "hell" is used in the Gospel as the rendering for Gehenna; that "hell" cannot necessarily mean, and ought not to be made to mean, more than Gehenna meant; that in the days of our Lord Gehenna did not normally imply an endless doom; and that therefore "hell" ought not—so far at any rate as the New Testament is concerned—to be understood of necessity to convey that meaning.

I cannot express this position more briefly than by saying that to a Jewish ear "Gehenna" did not mean "a place of necessarily endless torment," and therefore that "hell," when used as the equivalent of Gehenna, ought not to be so defined. The word "hell," in its popular usage, does but blur and misrepresent the conception of the word Gehenna, because it stands for a complex mass of inferences which ought not to be introduced into that compressed Jewish metaphor for future retribution.

To this argument I still adhere, nor has Dr. Pusey in the slightest particular overthrown it, though—conscious of its importance—he has devoted no less than fifty-six pages to its demolition. Dr. Pusey says that I am "mistaken both in the principle I lay down, and as to the facts bearing upon it."

I. As to the principle, he says that our Lord need not have used religious terms in the same sense as that which the Jews attached to them, and that "He had, when need was, to stamp their language anew." Certainly our Lord might have done this when need was; but when He did so He did so avowedly, so that there should be no mistake. If, indeed, it had been "clear from the context of our Lord's words," that He used Gehenna in a different

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sense from that in which the Jews used it, then, indeed, my argument would fall to the ground. But to assert that this is clear is merely to beg the question. The principle, therefore, stands intact. When our Lord uses any technical Hebrew term—and He used many such terms, such as Pharisee, Sadducee, Corban, Sanhedrin, Paradise, Abraham's bosom, &c.—He used them in the very same sense in which the Jews used them. To have done otherwise would have been to render His words purposely unintelligible.

II. But as to the facts, Dr. Pusey says that "the Jews believed in eternal [*i.e.* in Dr. Pusey's usage of the word "endless"] punishment before, or at the time of the coming of the Lord, and called the place of punishment Gehenna." And this Dr. Pusey endeavours to prove:—

1. From the Apocryphal Books;
2. From Josephus;
3. From the Targums;

and he proceeds to argue that the doctrine of the non-endlessness of torment in Gehenna was

i. An invention of Rabbi Akiba; and that

ii. In this he was followed by the Talmudists in general, and by modern Jews.

Now I think that on the threshold, before I enter into details, one little word will give a different aspect to this controversy. In my sermon I said "that the Jews never did, either then or at any period, *normally* attach to the word Gehenna that meaning of endless torment which we attach to hell."[1] Again, in the *Contemporary Review* I said that "Gehenna did not mean endless torment." I said that it did not mean it—but I carefully abstained from saying that it never in any passage had such a meaning attached to it; and by the word "normally" I expressly implied that the sense of "endless torment" may

[1] *Eternal Hope*, p. 8.

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possibly in some instances have been attached to it, but that it was *not its equivalent, or its ordinary meaning*. And so far was I from the assertion that no one had ever used the word Gehenna in the sense of "endless torment," that if the reader will only turn to page 211 of my *Eternal Hope*, he will there find it specified that Rabbi Saadjah, in his *Sepher Ha-emunah*, and that some others also of the post-Mishnic Rabbis, though few in number—had used the word in this sense.

But let me beg the reader to observe that my contention was not, as Dr. Pusey seems to suppose, that no one could possibly use "Gehenna" to imply "*endless* torment," but that no one had ever used it to mean endless torment *for all who incurred it*: in other words, it never meant on the lips of the Jew *a doom necessarily irreversible*. Now that is a fact which cannot for a moment be gainsaid; and it is a fact which proves my contention in its very fullest extent. For that contention never was that there was no such thing as an endless retribution, but that the belief in retribution did not necessarily involve a belief that it would be endless to all who might incur it. And this I proved by showing that *no Jew has ever understood by Gehenna a punishment from which none who incurred it would escape;* and therefore that our Lord—unless He expressly explained that He was using the word Gehenna in a new sense—could not possibly have attached to it the attribute of necessary endlessness. My urgent plea for the use of "Gehenna" instead of "hell" in our English version was exactly this:—By hell is meant, in popular language, and in the usage even of such theologians as Dr. Pusey, a punishment from which none escape who ever enter it; whereas, by Gehenna, a Jew meant a punishment which (as far, at any rate, as Jews were concerned) *the vast majority escaped after a brief period*. The uses of the two words "hell" and "Gehenna" are therefore deeply opposed.

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Gehenna means a punishment which, for Jews, was normally, and all but invariably, terminable; terminable, indeed, by annihilation, if not by deliverance, for all but a very few of the very worst apostates, and possibly even for them. Hell is taken to mean a punishment never terminable for any who incur it! How utterly unfit, then, is the word "hell" to serve as a rendering for the word "Gehenna"!

It is a translation which has become positively misleading, because it connotes a totally different order of conceptions in its most important particular, namely, the particular of its duration.

And what makes the rendering more painfully unfortunate—I had almost said inexcusable—is, that our Lord and the Apostles have themselves set us an unmistakable example as to how the word should have been dealt with.

For Gehenna was a technical Hebrew religious term. It was a Hebrew term, and not a Greek term. And yet exactly because it was technical, and because no Greek term could serve as its precise equivalent, our Lord and the Apostles would not translate it into Greek, but they preserved it, as it was, in its precise technical meaning, and only *transliterated* it from Hebrew letters into Greek letters;—as though He and they meant, in the most express manner, to prevent it from being mingled up with misleading conceptions which were alien from it.

We have suffered grievously, and I fear shall continue to suffer, by not following His divine example. It seems to me a positive duty to transliterate from Hebrew into English the word which our Lord would not alter, and which He therefore transliterated from Hebrew into Greek.

By neglecting that example we use a word which always means endless, final, irremediable—and to most minds material—punishment, as our substitute for a word which, to a Jew, nearly always meant an

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intermediate, a remedial, a metaphorical punishment, and above all a punishment which was regarded as normally terminable.

That was my argument, and it remains wholly unshaken.

Even if Dr. Pusey had been able to bring forward a number of passages in which Gehenna meant "endless torment," he would have failed to prove his point, unless he could also overthrow the proofs which I gave, that for centuries—from the days of the Mishna, which preserves the views of many Rabbis who were previous to, or contemporary with, our Lord, down to our own day—"Gehenna" was used by the Jews for a punishment which a soul might incur and yet escape. Dr. Pusey has not even attempted to do this. Has he even succeeded in showing that the Jews before, or during our Lord's day, used Gehenna for a punishment which would for any, and in any instance, be absolutely endless? The reader shall judge for himself.

1. He tries to prove this first of all from the Apocryphal books.

Hastily as my book was written, I had alluded to these books, and had given, in a single sentence, my reasons for interpreting their evidence differently from Dr. Pusey. Those reasons were that their evidence is disputable, and their date, in their present form, uncertain, and that the Jews have never acknowledged their dogmatic authority. "We attach but scant value to such compositions as the Book of Judith, 4 Esdras, Baruch, Enoch, 4 Maccabees, and the Psalms of Solomon," says Rabbi H. Adler, in a letter to me on this subject. "We do not regard these books as containing authoritative expositions of Jewish dogmas. They are not once quoted in the Talmud." Another learned Jew whom I consulted says: "The Jews do not consider the Apocryphal books as doctrinal, nor do they read them at public worship. They were never regarded as sacred."

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"The only non-Biblical book of which any notice was taken in the days of Hillel and Shammai, and by their schools, was the *Megillah Taanith*, or Book of Fasts. The only book which is much noticed in the Talmud is Ecclesiasticus. Indeed, by the latter half of the third century, they were actually classed with the *Sepharim Chitzonim*, or Books of Outsiders; and it was forbidden to a Jew to have them in his house. Nay, Rabbis Joshua ben Levi, Chia bar Abba, and Seira treat them as 'books of magic.'"[1] When I questioned the learned Rabbi Dr. Schiller Szinessy on this subject, he replied, "The Apocrypha has not the least authority among us Jews, and last of all is the Book of Enoch."

A. Dr. Pusey begins with the Book of Enoch.

I will not pause to ask whether the Book of Enoch can be at all relied on to give us a decisive opinion as to Jewish belief on the subject. I will not raise the question as to its date. Dr. Pusey says that its priority to the Christian era has only been questioned by Volkmar, and then probably because of dogmatic and critical bias. But this is not quite the case. Hofmann, and Weisse, and Moses Stuart, as well as Volkmar, place the composition of the whole work after the Christian era. Gfrörer, Lücke, and Hilgenfeld suppose that it has been interpolated, and the latter—no mean authority—argues that large interpolations were made in it as late as the second century after Christ; and what is very important, the Jewish historian Jost[2] does not suppose that it is entirely Jewish. Böttcher also[3] and other eminent

[1] Hamburger, *s. v. Apokryphen.* Origen (in Num. *Hom.* xxviii. 2) says that the Jews attached no authority to the Book of Enoch.

[2] *Gesch. Jud.* ii. 218.

[3] *De Inferis*, i. p. 261. He says, "In confusissimis illis iisdemque lectu dignissimis Pseud-Henochaeis, quibus etiam Noachea quaedam immixta sunt, quae mendosa . . . quae vetustiora, quae recentia," &c. He thinks that some of the images of future retribution are coloured by the rumours of the overthrow of Pompeii.

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scholars think that this book in its present form belongs, like the Sibylline oracles, to the first and second centuries after Christ.

Waiving all this, and accepting the book as purely representative of Jewish thought, three facts have to be considered in the interpretation of its language: (1) that it is highly poetic and metaphorical; (2) that much of it is written in a spirit of fierce anathematizing anger against the wicked and persecutors; (3) that, interpreted by itself, the book explains its own threats to mean annihilation, which is the very antithesis of endless torment.[1]

And such being the case, it would be against all rules of criticism to press the meaning of particular expressions. But not one of Dr. Pusey's quotations from the book even approximately proves the only point in question; not one of them shows that "Gehenna" was used of endless torments, still less that it was not also, and *normally*, used of *terminable retribution*.

α. The only relevant words in the first quotation from the preface are, "Great will be the everlasting damnation, and ye will find no pardon." But "everlasting" is a disputable rendering, and "damnation" is judgment; and the word Gehenna does not occur.

β. In the second quotation (x. 5, 6)[2] devils only and giants are spoken of; Gehenna is not mentioned; and they are to be shut up, *le-olam*, which is rendered "for all eternity," but (as has been proved again and again, and will be proved again farther on) is a vague phrase used far more often of terminable than of interminable periods.

[1] See Enoch xc. 13; xcii. 16 (Archbishop Lawrence). Abarbanel and Maimonides distinctly point out that this is in accordance with Jewish idiom—"annihilation" is described as "being destroyed, condemned, slain for ever."—ABARB. *De Capit. Fidei*, 24; MAIMONIDES, *Hilchoth Teshuba*, viii. 2; ALLEN, *Modern Judaism*, ix.

[2] The references are to the chapters in Dillmann's edition.

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γ. In the third (xxi. 1-6) transgressing "stars" are burned "*until* 10,000 worlds, the number of their guilt, are accomplished";—a *terminable punishment*,[1] and therefore one which tells directly against Dr. Pusey's view; and fallen angels are imprisoned "to all eternity," *i.e.* εἰς αἰῶνας, *le-olam*, as before. Nor is there any mention of the word Gehenna.

δ. In the fourth (xxvii. 15) a burning valley is described where those "who speak unseemly words against God" are to be judged "to eternity for evermore." It is possible (though far from indisputable)[2] that Gehenna may here be meant; but apart from the absolute indecisiveness of the phrase "to aeons" (εἰς αἰῶνας), these are the very offenders to whom would apply the words of our Lord in Matt. xii. 31, 32, and whose sin was analogous to that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost which should not be forgiven. But even this passage must be interpreted on the analogy of Old Testament prophecy. It must be compared with passages like Is. v. 14, and cannot be proved to mean more than overwhelming destruction such as is threatened to Sodom and to Edom.

ε. In the fifth quotation (xl. 24-26) the stars, the "seventy shepherds," and the "blinded sheep" are cast into a fiery deep and burned. Gehenna is not mentioned, and the retribution answers apparently to that "annihilation" which was the conception of Gehenna to the Jewish mind, not for all (which is my sole point), but for the worst only of those who incurred it.[3]

It is needless to go through the other quotations

[1] So the frequent *ledorî doroth* of the Rabbis ("to generations of generations"), the equivalent of εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων of the New Testament, meant a finite period.—WINDET, *De Vita functora statu*, p. 170.

[2] See Böttcher, *De Inferis*, p. 262.

[3] This is the inference of Bretschneider, in his *Dogmatik und Moral. d. apokr. Schriften*, pp. 299-325 (1805).

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in which, similarly, Gentile kings and devils "perish" or "are destroyed," and are threatened with aeonian judgment. The threats are limited to the grossest offenders; there is nothing to show that they do not mean "annihilation" or overwhelming acts of judgment of which the results continue visible; there is nothing to show that the words "eternal" and other rhetorical expressions mean "endless," any more than they do in so many other passages; and lastly they are *nihil ad rem*, because they do not so much as mention Gehenna, nor even if they did, do they in the very slightest degree affect my allegation that Gehenna always and normally meant a retribution *terminable for some*, and for the vast majority of Jews. For the rest Enoch says, "An everlasting judgment shall be executed, and blasphemers *shall be annihilated* everywhere."[1]

One such phrase as that in the Book of Enoch, ἕως συντελεσθῇ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ αἰῶνος τῶν αἰώνων— "till the judgment of the Age of Ages be accomplished," proves what I asserted directly and unmistakably. And I will quote on that phrase the remark of Windet, one of the most learned writers who has ever touched on the subject. "However you understand the phrase," he says, "it could not be used unless it signified something less than endlessness; for 'completion' does not accord with true endlessness. *For most Jews lay down that Gehenna, as the Greeks do that Tartarus, is appointed not so much for the torment as for the purification of the most wicked.*"[2]

B. I pass to the Fourth Book of Esdras. Here again we are dealing with a book of uncertain date and origin. Gfrörer, Wieseler, and Bauer assign it to the reign of Domitian; Lücke to the reign of Trajan;

[1] Enoch, xcii. 16 (Archbishop Lawrence).

[2] *De Vita functorum statu*, 1633. (The book is preserved in the *Fasciculus opusculorum*, vol. iv. 1-216.)

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Weisse even doubts whether it is Jewish at all, and it is generally admitted that it contains interpolations by Christian hands. It is a gloomy book full of thoughts of ruin and revenge. Dr. Pusey's quotation is from the missing fragment of the book translated by Mr. Bensley; it is full of severity, and makes a vague allusion to "the oven of Gehenna"; but this "oven" seems to be distinguished from the "lake of torment," and even respecting the "lake of torment" it is neither stated that its torment will be absolutely "endless," nor that it is interminable for all.

Further than this Dr. Pusey's quotations are shown to be irrelevant—shown to be mere rhetorical expressions to which the writer himself did not attach their strict meaning—because "endless torments" are wholly incompatible with the idea of "annihilation," and that is the doctrine which in various passages this writer seems unequivocally to teach. Thus in viii. 1, 48, he says, "The Most High hath made this world for many, but the world to come for few. . . . Like as the husbandman's seed perisheth if it come not up . . . even so perisheth man also (if unsaved). . . . Things present are for the present, and things to come for such as be to come." And in ix. 22, "Let the multitude perish, then, which was born in vain." The great Bentley said quite correctly that "some of the learnedest doctors among the Jews have esteemed it [extinction of being] the most dreadful of all punishments, and have assigned it for the portion of the blackest criminals of the damned —so interpreting Tophet, Abaddon, the Valley of Slaughter, and the like, for final extinction and deprivation of being."[1]

C. The quotations from the Apocalypse of Baruch are equally beside the mark. They speak generally of "perdition," and "torment," and "fire," but if the

[1] Boyle Lectures, serm. i.

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writer intended to be clear or consistent, the last passage seems most distinctly to describe the end of torment by annihilation. It therefore points to a terminable, not to an interminable, retribution. In the sole passage which mentions Gehenna it is only named by way of passing allusion, without any definition or description; and when the author says of Manasses that "in this world he was called ungodly, and at the end his dwelling was in the fire," the passage strongly favours what I have maintained, for it was a persistent view of the Jews that Manasses —apostate, murderer, and blasphemer though he was—was not finally lost. Thus we find in *Sanhedrin* f. 103, i. that in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13, the words "He was entreated of him" were sometimes read "He digged unto him," and that this "teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He! made for Manasseh as it were a secret opening in heaven, in order to receive him as a penitent."

D. The quotations from the Psalms of Solomon are similarly beside the mark. They neither mention Gehenna, nor say that future retribution is endless (since "for ever" has no such meaning), and rather imply than exclude the common Jewish notion of annihilation; they are, in fact, nothing but general menaces to the wicked founded on the language and imagery of the Prophets and the Psalms.

E. Lastly, the quotations from the Fourth Book of the Maccabees are equally ineffectual to throw any light whatever on the meaning of the word Gehenna—for this reason, among others, that they never mention it. The book was probably written in the days of Vespasian, and is deeply coloured by Alexandrian influences.[1] The threats of aeonian torment are addressed, not to any Jew, or to sinners in general, but to Antiochus, the very type of Antichrist. The very utmost they could prove, even if "aeonian" meant

[1] Gfrörer, *Philo.* ii. 173.

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endless, would be a point which I have not disputed, though I think it disputable, namely, that Jews of that day may have held the possibility of endless torments *for some*; not that they held that Gehenna was endless for all, or indeed normally for any. And if we turn from the dubious Fourth Book of Maccabees to the far more important and valuable Second Book, in which we do, beyond all question, find unadulterated Jewish opinion, a remarkable light is thrown upon the views of the Jews as to future punishment. For there, too, the same story is told of the seven brother-martyrs, and if there be any passage in all Jewish literature in which we should expect to find a distinct recognition of endless torments, and a denunciation of them upon the tyrant, it is this. Yet in this older and more genuine and less purely rhetorical version of that glorious martyrdom we do not find a single allusion to Gehenna or its supposed endlessness. Thus, in chapter vii. 14 we read the strongest of all the expressions used to their persecutor by these young heroes in their agonies: it is, "As for thee, thou shalt have no resurrection to life," which, at the worst, points to annihilation. Still more remarkable is verse 36, where all that the youngest sufferer says to Antiochus, after witnessing the horrible deaths of his brethren, is, "For our brethren, who have now suffered a short pain, are dead under God's covenant of eternal life; but thou, through the judgment of God, shalt receive just punishment for thy pride." "Just punishment," but not a syllable about endless torments: a fact which seems alone sufficient to prove that they formed no distinct part of the Jewish belief in the days of the Maccabees, though by that time the word Gehenna and its metaphorical usage were already known to them.

2. Dr. Pusey proceeds to the testimony of Josephus. I had alluded to it, but set it aside as valueless. I

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did not enter into my grounds for doing so, because I was not pretending to write an elaborate and exhaustive treatise, but only at brief notice, to throw together a sort of outline defence of the half-obliterated truths—for nine-tenths of what I urged is now acknowledged to be truth even by those who write against me—for which I had pleaded. I did, however, give the references to the very passages which Dr. Pusey has quoted, and briefly stated my reasons for paying no further attention to them.

a. In the first of those passages,[1] speaking of the Pharisees, Josephus says that "it is their conviction that souls have an immortal force, and that under the earth there are judgments and punishments to those who, in their life, have practised virtue or vice, and that to the one is adjudged a perpetual imprisonment, and to the others, a facility to live again."

β. In the second passage,[2] which throws light on the last words of the former, he says that the Pharisees think "that every soul is indestructible, but that the soul of the good alone passes into a different body, and that the soul of the bad is punished with endless punishment." And in section xi. of the same passage he says that the Essenes set apart for the souls of the bad "a gloomy and wintry den, teeming with incessant punishments."

Now in alluding to this evidence I set it aside because I regard Josephus as an untrustworthy witness. Dr. Pusey calls this an instance of "my wonted impetuosity." It may be so, but I had reasons for what I said, and I will now give them. My "wonted impetuosity" has never led me to make a single statement for which I could not produce evidence which seemed to me to be ample, nor have my many critics been able to convict me of one demonstrable error.

a. Josephus is an untrustworthy witness, because again and again he falsifies Jewish history, and colours

[1] Jos. *Antiq.* xviii. 1, § 3. [2] Jos. *B. J.* ii. 8, § 14.

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Jewish opinions, in order to please his Pagan readers. He smooths away whatever he thought that they would be inclined to ridicule, and deliberately gives to his narrative the tone which seemed likely to make it suit their views. In other words, he Graecises, and he Romanises, and he philosophises, and he Caesarises. How are we to estimate the opinion of a Jew who could speak of the Messianic prophecies as an "ambiguous oracle," and sink so low, in a peculiarly shameless moment, as to imply that a bourgeois adventurer like Vespasian was the promised Messiah of his race?[1]

b. I regard Josephus as an untrustworthy witness concerning the religious opinions of the Jews, because they themselves, who are surely the best judges as to their own beliefs, think very slightingly of his assertions. "Josephus," says ABARBANEL, "wrote while he was in the hands of his masters, under their eyes, and trembling under their law."

"The representations of Josephus (*Ant.* xii. and *B. J.* viii), are of small value," writes the Jewish historian, DR. JOST.[2]

"We attach but slight weight to Josephus," says RABBI H. ADLER, "on matters of religious dogma. The first clause of the passage in which he speaks of the belief of the Pharisees betrays the untrustworthiness of the second. There is not the slightest evidence to support the view that the souls of the good only passed into another body. Such a doctrine is not even alluded to in the Talmud."

"Josephus," says HAMBURGER, "was a weak character. The splendour of Rome utterly blinded him. He did not possess the strength of mind to rise above it." After his visit to Rome "he returned back to Judaea a different man. The object of his *Antiquities* was to set forth Judaism in a favourable light in the eyes of the educated Gentile world, and it requires

[1] *Jos. B. J.* vi. 5, § 4. [2] *Gesch. d. Judenthums*, i. 224.

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a critical eye to distinguish, in his writings, between the false and the true."

And Christian writers have no less emphatically rejected his testimony. "If we have not cited Josephus," says DR. POCOCK, "it is no wonder, since in giving the views of the sects he names respecting the other world, he seems to have used words better suited to the fashions and ears of the Greeks and Romans, than such as a scholar of the Jewish law would understand, or deem expressive of his meaning." [1]

"It is not to be disguised," says ARCHBISHOP USHER, "that having promised to derive his materials from the sacred records of the Hebrews, without diminution or addition, he has done this with little fidelity."

Alluding to his total suppression of the most memorable sin of the desert wanderings, namely, the worship of the golden calf, BISHOP WARBURTON says that "this shows his artful address throughout his whole work"; and in a note to the treatise against Apion he says, "This was carrying his complaisance to the Gentiles extremely far, and he misses no opportunity of conciliating their good will."

"Josephus," says MOSHEIM, "as is well known, attempted to show that there was less difference between the religion of the Jews and those of other nations than people generally supposed; in which he very frequently exceeds all bounds."

His *Antiquities*, says M. CHASLES in *Études sur le premier temps du christianisme*, "is a masterpiece of finesse. Never was the truth falsified with a skill more resolute, more subtle, and more deceptive."

"At the present moment," says his translator, DR. TRAILL, "no well-informed writer taking the religious side of the argument, would think of defending the Jewish historian, or of vouching for his affirmations."

[1] *Notae in Portam Mosis*, c. 6.

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c. I called him an untrustworthy witness because his Eschatology, as well as his Messianism, is expressly repudiated as of no value.[1] In the remarks which I have quoted from him he refers to the Greeks, and compares the views of the Essenes with theirs. It is to please and conciliate the Greeks that he omits the distinctly Pharisaic belief in the Resurrection (Acts xxiii. 6, 8; xxiv. 15; 2 Macc. 7), because the idea of the Resurrection of the body was made a jest among the Greeks[2] (Acts xvii. 18, 32). He deliberately compares the Pharisees to the Stoics, just as he compares the Essene Eschatology with the fables of the Greek Tartarus.

But, waiving these objections altogether, the testimony of Josephus bears but very slightly on my argument. His words, "endless durance," εἱργμὸς ἀΐδιος are unscriptural.[3] The latter word is used by Greeks, but never in the New Testament for the future punishment of men; the same remark applies still more strongly to his evidently Greek-coloured account of the fancies of the Essenes, for neither "incessant" nor "vengeance," nor "den" nor "gloomy" nor "wintry" are words that find, in this connexion, any Scriptural authorization.[4] If we accept on such authority, the conclusion that the conception of "endless torment"

[1] Hamburger, *Talm. Wörterb.* ii. 508. Professor Marks and others speak to the same effect.

[2] Böttcher, *De Inferis*, §§ 238, 519. He says that Josephus only used the word "Anastasis" once, and then in the sense of "overthrow."—*B. J.* vi. 6, 2. Any one who will carefully read the story of the Witch of Endor in the *Antiquities* (v. xiii.) will see that the selection of words is dictated by a desire to conform to Greek notions. Ewald (*History of the People of Israel*, v. 366) speaks of his account of the sects as specially arbitary and devoid of thorough knowledge.

[3] In Jude 6 it is used poetically of the chains in which devils are reserved for future judgment; in Rom. i. 20 of the power of God.

[4] ζοφώδη καὶ χειμέριον . . μυχὸν, γέμοντα τιμωριῶν ἀδιαλείπτων.—*B. J.* ii. 8, § 11. The three first words do not occur at all in the New Testament. ἀδιάλειπτος in Rom. ix. 2, and 2 Tim. i. 3 (both times within the limits of earthly life); τιμωρία only in the singular, and only once, Heb. x. 29.

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was not unknown to the Graecising Jews of that day, this proves absolutely nothing against my assertion that Gehenna (which Josephus does not mention) had no such meaning normally; and that it is entirely indefensible to make it mean endless torment *for all who incur it.* Our Lord could only have used the word in its Jewish sense; and for the sake of all who love truth better than human tradition, I must again and again insist that its Jewish sense was *not* that which is now popularly attached to the word "hell."

3. The appeal to the Targums equally fails to shake my position. As regards their date, if, as very able critics suppose, the Targum of Onkelos belongs to the end of the third or even to the end of the second century, that is a date after Rabbi Akiba had (according to Dr. Pusey) altered the opinion of the Jews from an endless to a temporal Gehenna, that would alone show that the mere phrases of the Targum have not the meaning which Dr. Pusey assigns to them.[1] But what bearing have such phrases as "the second death" in Onkelos (Deut. xxxiii. 6), and in Jonathan (Is. xxii. 14, lxv. 5, 6), on my position? Dr. Deutsch and others who knew the Targums best, wholly failed to see in them the meaning which Dr. Pusey attaches to them. To me it is perfectly obvious that by "second death" they meant annihilation, which, by their day, at any rate, if not long before, had become a common belief among the Jews. The phrase meant what in another place Jonathan defines it to mean—that "the wicked shall not live in the world to come."

It is surprising to me that Dr. Pusey should have collected these passages from the Targums. Out of some fourteen references every one, with a single exception, is absolutely *nihil ad rem.* They merely mention Gehenna as a place of future punishment; no one ever dreamt of denying that the word might be used in that sense. The point denied is that it meant endless

[1] According to one account Onkelos was a pupil of Akiba.

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punishment for all who incur it. But not one of these passages—except the one of which we shall speak directly—says a word directly or indirectly to imply that the punishment was endless for any. I had already said all that was necessary about them when I referred to the Targumim (*Eternal Hope*, pp. 82, 214) and said that in these passages "fire" and "for ever" meant just what they mean in Scripture, which is not necessarily either material fire or endless duration. Where any further idea is implied it is quite distinctly that of annihilation, not endless torment. Thus in Ps. xxxvii. 20, Jonathan compares the punishment of the wicked to the slaying and burning of lambs,—"so the wicked shall fall and be consumed in the smoke of Gehenna"; and in the Targum on Ps. cxl. 12, the "being cast down into Gehenna" is contrasted with "rising to life eternal"; and in that on Eccl. viii. 10, the wicked "go to be burned in Gehenna." Now "annihilation"—and to see anything but "annihilation" in these passages is to interpret them by Christian not by Jewish notions—is the very opposite to "endless torments." From Mal. iv. 3—"And ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I shall prepare, saith the Lord"—the Talmudists drew the well-known notions, found in the *Rosh Hoshanah*,[1] that, after a terminable Gehenna, the souls of the wicked should be consumed by fire, whose cinders wind will scatter under the soles of the feet of the righteous.

The one passage which might be regarded as an exception is the Targum on Is. xxxiii. 14, where Gehenna is the name given to "aeonian burnings." The best proof that there is no dream of endlessness here is the fact that Isaiah is speaking of the Assyrian invasion; and the "aeonian burnings" are temporal conflagrations. Besides this the Tophet in Gehenna, of which the prophet speaks in xxx. 33, is the literal

[1] *V. infra*, p. 201.

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topographical Gehenna, and therefore the word in the Targumist must in this place have the same literal meaning.[1]

So that I see no reason to alter one word of my remark,[2] "that the Rabbinic opinion was that of Abarbanel, that the soul would only be punished in Gehenna for a time proportionate to the extent of its faults, and it is in accordance with that belief, and that of 'annihilation' as being 'the second death'; that we must interpret the passages which are sometimes adduced from the Targums of Jonathan and Onkelos and from various parts of the Book of Enoch."[3] But since Dr. Pusey has adduced all those entirely irrelevant passages from the Targums, I will adduce two passages which he has not mentioned, and which are not only entirely relevant, but absolutely prove my whole position.

One is from the Targum of Jonathan on Is. lxvi. 24, where the Targumist, after a common Rabbinic method, taking the word dîraôn דִּרָאוֹן ("contempt") as though it were דַּי רַאיוֹן, has this remarkable passage, "*And the wicked shall be judged in Gehenna until the righteous say concerning them, 'We have seen enough'* (דַּי)."[4]

The other passage is from the Targum on Is. xxii. 14, where (as in the Book Zohar) the "second death" is explained to mean neither hell nor annihilation, but—so shifting were Jewish notions on this subject—"that which happens, when a soul, that has animated a body a second time, separates from it."[5]

[1] "I fully agree with you," writes Rabbi M. Adler, "that the expressions in the Targumim which speak of a 'second death' teach not 'endless suffering,' but 'annihilation.' The Targum on Is. lxvi. 24, distinctly points to the terminability of Gehenna. The לִיקְדוּת עָלַם of Is. xxxiii. 14, is a literal reproduction of the text, and may with propriety be rendered 'enduring burnings.'" [2] *Eternal Hope*, p. 213.

[3] Gfrörer (*Jahrb. des Heils*, ii. 289, 311) fails to see the right view.

[4] See White, *Life in Christ*, p. 172; Weill, iv. 292; xiii. ch. iii. § i.

[5] See Basnage, *Hist. des Juifs*, iv. 30 *ad fin.*

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And thus when Dr. Pusey says, that "Belief in the eternity of future punishment is contained in the Fourth Book of Maccabees, in the so-called Psalms of Solomon: the second death is mentioned in the Targums of Jonathan and Onkelos; Josephus attests the belief of the Pharisees and Essenes in the eternity of punishment"—I reply that slight as is the authority of 4 Maccabees, the utmost that it indicates is what I never denied, viz. that punishment rhetorically called everlasting, might be the doom of some; that the passages quoted from the Psalms of Solomon are wholly indecisive even as to endlessness, and that neither they nor the others in 4 Maccabees touch the force of my remark about Gehenna; that the "second death" in the Targums means sometimes annihilation, sometimes metempsychosis — both of which are incompatible with endless torments; that other passages in the Targums (as well as in 4 Esdras,[1] &c.) speak distinctly of terminable punishment; lastly, that the evidence of Josephus is, both by Jewish and Christian testimony, perfectly worthless, because Josephus was not an honest man.

I appeal to any candid reader, I appeal to Dr. Pusey himself, to say whether the two passages which I have adduced from the Targums, and especially the former, do not go farther to establish the view which I maintained, that Gehenna never *normally* meant "endless torments for all who incurred it," than all his passages put together prove on the other side? "It was the opinion of the Jews," says Archbishop Wake, a learned and perfectly impartial witness, that "in the 'future life,' a remission might be had for some sins that were not otherwise to be forgiven"[2]; and the "future life" is used, as

[1] See 4 Esdr. xiii. where the fire burn till "nothing is left but the dust of their ashes and the smoke of their burning."

[2] Archbishop Wake, *Discourse of Purgatory*, p. 18.

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every one knows, both for the Messianic kingdom and for the condition after death.

III. I now turn to Dr. Pusey's second position, that it was Rabbi Akiba who first taught the Jews that Gehenna was terminable by deliverance or annihilation.

But before I examine that strange allegation, let me recapitulate and strengthen still further the strong and decisive evidence as to the Jewish opinion on the subject, which I adduced in *Eternal Hope*. If all the following passages do not prove that Gehenna might be terminable, there is simply no such thing as proof at all.

First come the two *loci classici* of the Talmud. The first of these, from its importance, shall be given at length.

a. Rosh Hoshanah, f. 16 and f. 17. "There will be three divisions on the Day of Judgment [observe, not at death, but as Rashi adds, where the dead will revive], the perfectly righteous [*i.e.* those whose merits predominate, Rashi]; the perfectly wicked [whose demerits predominate, Rashi]; and the intermediate class [whose merits and demerits are evenly balanced, Rashi]. The first will be at once inscribed and sealed to life eternal; the second at once to Gehenna (Dan. xii. 2); the intermediate will descend into Gehenna and keep rising and sinking (Zech. xii. 9)."

This opinion was endorsed by both the great schools of Jewish opinion, the Shammaites and the Hillelites, except that the latter—inclining always to leniency—said that in the case of the intermediate class mercy would incline the balance towards acquittal, so that they would no more sink into Gehenna.

β. The comments of Tosafoth (additions to the Gemara by individual Rabbis) run as follows—that the souls of the intermediate class will between death and judgment have satisfied their sentence in Gehenna, and therefore may be acquitted. The Talmud continues,

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"Israelites and idolaters who have sinned with their bodies will (after the Day of Judgment) descend into Gehenna, where they will be punished for a period of twelve months. At the end of that period their bodies will be annihilated and their souls consumed by fire, whose cinders a wind will scatter under the soles of the feet of the righteous (Mal. iv. 37). But the *minim* (heretics), informers, Epicureans, &c., descend into Gehenna and are punished generation on generation (Is. lxvi. 24). Gehenna shall cease, but they shall not cease (Ps. xlix. 14), as it is said, 'their substance shall wear out hell.'"

This passage is analogous to many which Dr. Pusey has quoted; but the fact that Rabbi H. Adler says, "it does not, I think, imply endless punishment," accords with that of the majority of Jewish authorities, and therefore shows that they interpreted these Scriptural and Talmudic expressions to imply not infinite but indefinite duration. Such is the unquestionable meaning of "generation on generation" (*Le-dor va-dor*): and it is superfluous to add that if the Talmud taught the doctrine of endless torments, no Rabbi would venture—as they all but unanimously do—to repudiate the doctrine. Maimonides embodies the passage *verbatim* in his *Yad Hachesakah Hilchoth Teshubah:* yet Maimonides held the doctrine of annihilation, not of endless torments. And are not the Jews the best judges as to the meaning of their own language, and the tenets of their own theology? They would as soon think of denying a dictum of the Mishna as a Roman Catholic Ultramontane would dispute the decree of an Oecumenical Council.

γ. *Baba Metzia*, f. 58, 2. "All who go down into Gehenna rise up again, with the exception of those who do not rise, the adulterer, &c." It was a common opinion of the Jews that these were annihilated, as Maimonides thought, who explains "excision" (Kareth) in this sense. Hence in both respects the

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meaning conveyed to the ear of a Jew by the word Gehenna was not only different from, but *antithetic to* the popular meaning of the word by which our translators have rendered it. For as regards Jews, Gehenna meant terminable retribution for the majority, or in the worst cases annihilation: whereas hell means torments endless and irrevocable for every single soul that incurs them.

I will now add some thirty other Talmudic and Jewish authorities:

Chagigah, f. 27, 1. R. Shimon ben Lakish said the fire of Gehenna has no power over transgressors of Israel.

Eruvin, f. 19, 1. Those who have incurred a temporary Gehenna are rescued by Abraham.

Nedarim, f. 8, 2. There is no Gehenna in the world to come according to Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish.

Nishmath Chajim, f. 82, 2. The righteous, who have committed some sins, quickly pass through hell.

Avoda Zara, 1. Gehenna is nothing but a day in which the impious will be burned.

Gibborim, f. 70, 1, *Nishmath Chajim*, p. 83, 1, *Jalkuth Shimeoni*, f. 83, 3, &c., all say that twelve months is the period of punishment in Gehenna.

Emek Hammelech, f. 138, 4: "The wicked stay in Gehenna till the Resurrection, and then the Messiah, passing through it, redeems them." The same treatise (f. 16, 2), says even of the worst sinners, like those of Sodom, and spies who betray Jews, that they are punished "till the time decreed is expired," and then allowed to transmigrate.

Midrash Rabba, 1, 30. *Aboda Zara*, 3. "After the last judgment Gehenna exists no longer."

Zijoni, f. 69, 3: "There is only a thread's thickness between Paradise and Gehenna."

Asarah Maamaroth, f. 85, 1: "There will hereafter be no Gehenna."

Jalkuth Shimeoni, f. 46, 1: Gabriel and Michael

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will open the 8,000 gates of Gehenna and let out Israelites and righteous Gentiles.

Jalkuth Chadash, f. 57, 1: "The righteous bring out of Gehenna imperfect souls."

Jalkuth Koheleth: "God created Paradise and Gehenna, that those in the one should deliver those in the other."

Jalkuth Tehillin: "The praises of God that ascend from Gehenna are more than those that ascend from Paradise, for each one that is a step higher praises God."

Rabbi Bar Nachman: "The future world (the *Olam habba*) will have its Gehenna, but the last times will have it no more."

Joreh Deah *ad fin.*: "As is commonly said, 'The punishment of wicked Israelites in Gehenna is twelve months.'"[1]

Rabbi Akiba, "the second Moses, the second Ezra." "The duration of the punishment of the wicked in Gehenna is twelve months." *Edyoth*, ii. 10.

In the Othjoth, which is attributed to him, the dead say the Amen to the Kaddish (prayer for the dead) of Zerubbabel; and Gabriel and Michael set them free, through the 40,000 gates of Gehenna.

Zohar: "Noah stayed twelve months in the Ark because the judgment of sinners lasts so long."

So too Rabbi Jose, Rabbi Jehudah, Rabbi Eliezer, Buxtorf, s.v. נְהִגָּם R. Kimchi on Ps. 1: "Their soul shall perish with their body in the day of death."

Bartolocci (*Bibl. Rabbinica*, ii. 128-162), after elaborate examination, concludes that the Jews did not believe in a material fire, and thought that such a fire as they did believe in would one day be put out.

R. Jacob Chavif in *En Jacob*: "Some, after they have been punished in Gehenna, will perhaps be deemed worthy of the life to come."

[1] Other passages may be found quoted in Windet's learned book, *De Vitâ functorum statu*, pp. 154-157 (1663).

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R. Menahem on Sam. xxv. 29: "The wicked are in chains till the time when they go out hence."

Maimonides, "the eagle of the doctors," makes Gehenna in its worst form equivalent to Kareth, "excision," and explains it not of endless torments but of annihilation. The "future age" (*Olam Habba*) is absolute universal bliss and holiness (Preface to the *Thirteen Articles of Faith*).

R. Moses Almosny, in *Tephillah Mosheh*, says even of the extremely wicked—"If any one have sinned much he shall be punished much; afterwards however he shall gain his rest."

Rabbi Albo gives three grades to Gehenna: 1. Gehenna for a year, and then blessedness. 2. Gehenna for a year, and then annihilation. 3. Aeonian (which does not necessarily mean "endless") chastisement for none but the worst renegades.—*Ikkarim*, iv. 30, 40. (See p. 208, *n.* 2.)

Midrash on *Koheleth:* "What is the distance between Paradise and Gehenna? According to Johanan a wall; according to Acha a palm-breadth; according to other Rabbis only a finger-breadth."

Rabbi Abarbanel in *Miphaloth Elohim*, viii. 6: "The soul will only be punished in Gehenna for a time proportionate to the extent of its faults; and then annihilated."

Many Rabbinic legends point in the same direction. Thus, when the wicked Rabbi Acheer—surnamed Ben Zoma—died, and the smoke which issued from his grave was taken as a proof that he was in Gehenna, Rabbi Johanan vowed that at his death he would take Acheer by the hand and lead him to Paradise, in sign of which the smoke should cease to issue from the grave. It did so, and one of the mourners exclaimed, "Even the doorkeeper of Gehenna could not stand before thee, our Rabbi!"

In *Soteh*, f. 10, 1: "We are told that at the death of Absalom, Gehenna burst upwards at the feet of

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David, who eight times exclaimed, 'My Son,' and rescued him from the seven regions of Gehenna and raised him to the world to come."[1]

Rabbi Marks: "The upshot is, that the Jewish doctrine laboured rather to adorn the future of the good than to describe the destiny of the wicked. Stronger than their fear of justice is their belief in the divine mercy, 'He will not contend for ever, neither will He retain His anger to eternity' (Ps. ciii. 9), which is a powerful argument against the modern Christian doctrine of everlasting woe."

Editor of the *Jewish Chronicle:* "Endless torment has never been taught by the Rabbis as a doctrine of the Jewish Church."

Hamburger, author of the *Talmudisches Wörterbuch:* "As to this point, the Talmudic teachers declare themselves distinctly against the supposition of the endlessness of the torments of hell."—*Talm. Wörterb.* s. v. "Hölle."

I will close the series with a passage from a tract especially devoted to Gehenna—namely the *Masseketh Gehinnom*—which has been several times published, and lately by Dr. Jellinek in his *Beth Hammedrash*. "After all this, the Holy One, blessed be He, hath pity upon His creatures, even as it is written, 'For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth.' And these words are applied to the case of the heathen Gentiles."

Basnage, *Hist. des Juifs*, iv. 32, f. 7: "This punishment is not generally acknowledged to be everlasting."

Philippson, *Israel. Religionslehre*, ii. 255: "The Rabbis teach no eternity of hell torments; even the greatest sinners were punished for generations. This they express allegorically by saying that between hell and paradise there is only a breadth of two

[1] Stories of deliverance from Gehenna may be found in Mr. Hershon's *Talmudic Miscellany*, pp. 305-312.

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fingers, so that it will be very easy for the purified sinner to reach from the last unto the first."

Dr. Deutsch: "Of this you may be quite sure, that there is not a word in the Talmud that lends any support to the damnable dogma of endless torment."—*Letter to Rev. S. Cox.*

"There is no everlasting damnation according to the Talmud. The sinner has but to repent sincerely and the gates of everlasting bliss will spring open."—*Remains*, p. 53.

Chief Rabbi B. Mosse, of Avignon, has written against the doctrine of endless torments in his journal, *La Famille de Jacob.*

Chief Rabbi Michel A. Weill, after explaining Gehenna figuratively, says, "Would there not be a flagrant contradiction between endless torments and the goodness of God, so magnificently celebrated in Biblical annals? Nothing therefore seems more incompatible with the true Biblical tradition than an eternity of suffering and chastisement."—*Le Judaïsme*, iv. 590.

Rabbi H. Adler: "With respect to the Rabbis of the present day, I think it would be safe to say that they do not teach endless retributive suffering. They hold that it is not conceivable that a God of Mercy and Justice would ordain infinite punishment for finite wrong-doing."—*Letter to Dr. Farrar.*

Rabbi Loewe says: "*Olam* simply signifies for a long time. The Hebrew Scriptures do not contain any doctrine referring to everlasting punishment."

Now, to sum up these numerous testimonies as to what the common Jewish opinion now is, and has been, in all centuries since Christ, they prove,

1. That, according to the opinion of the Mishna and the Gemara, and all the most eminent Rabbis, Gehenna meant for the majority of Jews, if not for all Jews, brief temporary punishment, followed by forgiveness.[1]

[1] See Weill, *Le Judaïsme*, iv. 540-624.

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2. For worse offenders, long but still terminable punishment.

3. For the worst offenders of all—especially Gentile offenders—punishment followed by annihilation.

Therefore the normal meaning of Gehenna was diametrically opposed to what is now the normal popular meaning of hell, which is defined "as endless torments for all who incur it." It corresponds far more to the notion of purgatory than to that of hell.[1]

Two conspicuous Rabbis, as I pointed out, seem to teach endless punishment, Rabbi Albo and Rabbi Saadjah—I might have added Leo of Modena and Rabbi Menasseh—but this endless punishment, even with them, is not for *all* who enter Gehenna, only for the worst. I have already given Rabbi Albo's opinions, and even if he meant endless torments for some, it neither helps Dr. Pusey's position, nor injures mine, for mine is not "that no Rabbis ever thought that Gehenna would be endless," but that "all Rabbis alike taught that for some, if not for the majority, Gehenna would either be terminable, or would end in annihilation[2]; and that if our Lord had meant by Gehenna 'endless torments to all who pass into future retribution,' it is impossible to suppose that He would

[1] Basnage, *Hist. des Juifs*, iv. 32, § 9. His remark on the wavering and self-contradictory views of some of the Rabbis will apply also to some of the Fathers. He says, "Though it is a common maxim of the Rabbis that 'there is no repentance after death,' yet they bring forth the souls out of the dark dungeon of hell. How can these things that seem so contradictory be reconciled? They do it by saying that the God of mercy is always most inclined to compassion. They maintain that very few Jews remain in hell."

[2] Several Rabbis held that Gehinnom was the same as Kareth ("excision"), and that of this there were three grades. 1. A punishment for twelve months, and then deliverance. 2. The same punishment, ended by annihilation. 3. For the worst criminals and greatest renegades "endless woes," with a prospect and possibility, however, of God's mitigatory mercy, for which Albo referred to Ps. lxii. 12, xcix. 8 ("Thou wast a God who forgavest them, though Thou tookest vengeance of their inventions"), Mic. vii. 18-20, &c.

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have used a word which normally excluded such a meaning."

For it must be observed that even such Rabbis as Albo and Saadjah held no such doctrine as that which is popularly held about hell. On the contrary, one if not both of them taught that even without repentance, all but capital offenders—and therefore the majority of mankind—are admitted to grace.[1] They held, as Dr. Pusey does, that any repentance, even the slightest velleity of repentance—even at the moment of death—is an impenetrable shield against retribution, and that—

> "Who with repentance is not satisfied
> Is not of heaven or earth."

They interpret Job xxxiii. 23 to mean that 999 hostile testimonies before God are outweighed by one favourable testimony[2]; and thus they reduce almost to zero the number of those whose doom is to be annihilation or perdurable torment — who are only those who have not done one meritorious act, or had one desire to repent. "So that," says Chief Rabbi Weill, "even taken literally, endless torment loses its terror, since it does not involve conceptions which militate against a merciful God, whose lovingkindness is over all His works."

And to put the last touch of certainty to all these cumulative proofs, I refer to the authorised creed of the Jews—the fundamentals of their faith as drawn

[1] See Weill, *Le Judaïsme*, iv. 160. No Rabbi could quite throw overboard the Talmudic aphorism (*Aboda Zara*, 3), that "there is no Gehenna in the future age." Even if with Rabbi Bar Nachman they thought Gehenna would continue, in the *Olam Habba* they held that it would disappear in the "last times" (*Leadith habo*). Weill, iv. 616.

[2] "A man's advocates [פרקליטין "paracletes"] are repentance and good works. And if 999 plead against him, and only one for him, he is spared, as it is said (Job xxxiii. 23), 'If there be an interceding angel, one among a thousand, to declare for man his uprightness, then He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit.'"—*Shabbath*, f. 32, 1. See *Walch. Rel. Streit.* v. 709.

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up by Maimondes and by them universally accepted. It is as silent about endless torments as are the creeds of Christendom. In the eleventh article of this Creed it is said—and it would have been well, perhaps, if no confession of faith had dogmatized further—

"I believe with a perfect faith that the Creator will reward those who keep His commandments, and punish those who transgress them."

Surely any one who pretends that this overwhelming mass of evidence does not prove that "Gehenna" bore to Jewish ears a meaning totally unlike that which "Hell" means to most Christian ears, must be stereotyped in hopeless prejudice, and must be incapable of any discrimination between truth and falsehood. And seeing that we naturally turn to Jews and to Jewish writings of acknowledged authority to explain their own technical terms; and seeing that no writings are more authoritative with the Jews than the Mishna and Gemara, and no Rabbis are so highly esteemed as Rabbis Akiba, and Maimonides, and Abarbanel; and seeing that all the ancient authorities are at one with the highest living authorities among the Rabbis in saying that, in the view of their Church, Gehenna does not now mean, and has never meant, a doom to necessarily endless torment[1]; and seeing that our Blessed Lord always used technical Jewish words in their technical Jewish sense—unless He avowedly gave them a different meaning—I should have thought that my point was amply proved.

What vitiates the whole of Dr. Pusey's argument, even if it were tenable in its details, is that it is intended to prove a point which, so far from denying, I expressly admitted, namely, that some Rabbis understood Gehenna to mean endless torments *for some;* but, so far from shaking, he is obliged incidentally to confirm, the point which I did assert, viz. that Jewish opinion, as represented especially by the

[1] See quotations and references in *Eternal Hope*, p. 211.

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Talmud and the voice of the Rabbis for many centuries, admitted the terminability of Gehenna for many, and its terminability by annihilation for yet more.

My language, so far from being "impetuous," was perfectly measured and scrupulously accurate on this point. It was this—

"It is demonstrable that Jews did not hold, and as a Church they have never held, the two doctrines which I am here declaring to be unproven, viz.—

"1. The finality of the doom passed at death (by which I mean the finality of the *condition* into which the soul may pass at death).

"2. The doctrine of torment, endless if once incurred."[1]

I have proved these points from the most recognised and least disputable sources of Jewish opinion, by showing that as a Church they repudiate the doctrine; and that they teach again and again that many who enter Gehenna pass out of it. When Dr. Pusey says that this remark did not apply to mankind in general, but only to the Jews, he is not strictly accurate, for certainly many of the Rabbis (much more distinctly than many of the Fathers) taught the deliverance from Gehenna of all the pious of the Gentiles, and the annihilation of the rest. Even if it were not so it would not affect my point. Our Lord was speaking to Jews; and if "Gehenna" meant a punishment terminable for nearly all Jews and many Gentiles, it had a meaning wholly unlike that which is popularly given to "Hell."

But Dr. Pusey ingeniously argues that this opinion was the invention of Rabbi Akiba!

To the attempted proof of this view he assigns no less than twenty-seven pages (pp. 75–102); but in all those pages I can find no approach to even the most distant kind of proof of so strange a notion. He may be correct in saying that Rabbi Akiba was

[1] *Eternal Hope*, p. 81.

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the first to define the punishment of Gehenna as only lasting *a twelvemonth*, but, so far as I can see, he does not offer the smallest proof that Rabbi Akiba was the first to hold that Gehenna was a punishment not necessarily endless.

He gives us indeed some interesting particulars, mainly quoted from Grätz, about Rabbi Akiba and his innovations. That those particulars were not new to me—that I had long ago quoted them and many other peculiarities of Akiba's system—any one may see who will read my articles in the *Expositor* on Rabbinic Exegesis and Rabbinic Eschatology.[1] But the innovations of Rabbi Akiba were only innovations as to the minutiae of the Halacha. There is no evidence to show that he altered one fundamental doctrine of Jewish theology. No Jewish writer has so much as dropped a hint that he modified the main conceptions of Jewish Eschatology. By his time authority and precedent reigned absolutely supreme in Jewish schools. The Rabbis ascribe this notion of the twelve months' Gehenna, not to Akiba, but to the school of Hillel,[2] and therefore to a period long before Akiba. The school of Shammai also inferred from Zech. xiii. 9 ("And I will bring the third part through the fire") and 1 Sam. ii. 6 ("The Lord bringeth down to Sheol, and bringeth up"), that all the intermediate class of men who are neither saintly nor depraved would keep rising and sinking in Gehenna. To have run counter to an established authority on matters of dogma would have cost the teacher death or excommunication. Knowing that Jewish belief on the subject of Gehenna was fluctuating and undefined—knowing that in the Jewish as in the Christian Church much respecting this subject was left to opinion—knowing that it was not normally understood of an endless

[1] See the *Expositor*, vol. v. pp. 362-378; vii. 295-317.
[2] Windet, p. 154.

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retribution for all who incurred it—there would indeed have been nothing to prevent Rabbi Akiba from fixing twelve months as the limit, and assigning for that limitation a fantastic piece of Rabbinic exegesis. But if Dr. Pusey says that Akiba was the first to speak of Gehenna as a terminable punishment for any, he broaches a theory in favour of which he has adduced absolutely nothing beyond his own opinion, which is rejected by every learned Jew whom I have consulted on the subject.

Since writing the above I have received a letter from Rabbi H. Adler, in which he says—"It may, I think, be safely assumed that Rabbi Akiba would teach no novel doctrine respecting future punishment, but that he would only elaborate and but slightly modify the teachings of his predecessors." Dr. Schiller Szinessy, so well known for his Rabbinic learning, writes even more decisively and emphatically, and says—"Rabbi Aquiba could not formulate an article of faith any more than I could."

I have consulted many Jewish books about Jewish opinions, written both by Jews and by Christians. In not one of those books of any age can I find so much as a hint of this opinion. It is not in the Mishna, or the Gemara, or in Maimonides, or in Zunz, or in Bartolocci, or in Basnage, or in Buxtorf, or in Stehelin, or in Grätz, or in Jost, or in Chiarini, or in Hamburger, or in Deutsch, or in Munk, or in Derenbourg, or in Allen, or in Weill, or in Hershon; nor is there a trace of it in the works of Lightfoot, Meuschen, Schöttgen, Eisenmenger, Wagenseil; nor again can I find it in recent Talmudic translations, like those of Wünsche and Schwab. The reader who is content to suppose that the now prevalent belief of the Jews as to the terminability of Gehenna is due to Rabbi Akiba, must do so on the isolated *ipse dixit* of Dr. Pusey. So far as I am concerned, all the pages about Rabbi Akiba

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are an *ignoratio elenchi*—they have no bearing on the controversy. Rabbis might do as they liked about Akiba's Gehenna of twelve months,[1] but it is a violation of all probability—it is a contradiction of all that we know respecting the development of Jewish theology—to assert that it is from him that they borrowed such a notion as that of Rabbi Chanina in the *Rosh Hosanah*, who said, "*All who go down to Gehenna arise*, save three (classes of persons) who go down and do not arise."

Jewish opinion on the subject has always varied. That it has done so was part of my "palmary argument." It varied because Scripture had laid down nothing definite respecting it, and because the Jews were not so utterly ignorant of their own language and literature as to attribute to the metaphorical contemporary allusion "eternal burnings," in Is. xxxiii. 14, the dogmatic meaning of "endless tortures in hell fire." Jewish opinion then was at liberty, if it chose, to hold the doctrine of annihilation, or even of endless torments; but Jewish opinion never varied at all on the only point respecting which I maintained it to be invariable; it never held that an entrance into Gehenna was necessarily identical with an endless doom.

That was my sole argument; and I am much mistaken if, in spite of all these pages, written in supposed refutation of my view, Dr. Pusey will not now admit that it is unanswerably true.

And what can it avail to go to the Koran? No one surely would accept that strange amalgam of visions, theories, and traditions, Jewish, Christian, and original, as being of the smallest authority on Jewish opinions. Yet, so far as it is so, Dr. Pusey concedes all I want when he says—"But Mohammed has also the Jewish belief that all go to Gehenna for a time,

[1] They said "twelve months," and not "a year," because some years have an intercalary month—Ve-adar.

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and will be led round it, but that wrong-doers will be left in it." In those words, "*go to Gehenna for a time*" (not to dwell on the point that the majority of those left in it are described by most Jews as annihilated), lies my proof that "hell" is not now, and never was, in its popular expectation, an equivalent for "Gehenna." Moreover, the Koran too has an intermediate place between Paradise and Gehenna.[1]

If Gehenna was used to mean for some souls a short purgatory; for some a long purgatory; for some annihilation; and for the fewest of all (which if its meaning at all was its rarest and most disputable meaning) endless torments; how can it be exclusively interpreted in that meaning which most Jews expressly repudiate? how can it be rightly interpreted to mean "endless torments" and nothing else? How can it be just, or reverent, or otherwise but conducive to dangerous error, to render a word thus proved to imply, in its most normal sense, a terminable punishment, by a word which, in popular usage, exclusively means a final, endless, and irrevocable punishment? To do so—and to continue the word in our English version after these facts have been pointed out—is to introduce into Jewish notions the same utter confusion as would be introduced into all Roman Catholic theology, if, wherever the word purgatory is used, we were to strike out purgatory and replace the word by "hell." I fear that it will be said hereafter that to do so with our present knowledge is a course which we should hardly have expected from scholars so eminent as those who compose the Revision Committee.[2]

[1] Koran, Sur. vii. See Windet, *De Vitâ functorum statu*, p. 164.

[2] Dr. Pusey says that "Chief Rabbi Weill himself expressly acknowledges the traditional belief" (p. 91). Yet in the very passage which Dr. Pusey quotes, Dr. Weill says that it is only "certain categories of sinners" who are marked out for endless punishments, and that others are "devoted to annihilation"; and how does he continue the passage after the point at which Dr. Pusey stops short? He proceeds to ask whether the "endless suffering" does not mean the annihilation of which the Talmud sometimes speaks, or, at any rate, whether it does

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There is one further argument which Dr. Pusey brings into prominence in his second edition,[1] on which, with deep reverence, I desire to add a few words. It is briefly this—that the majority of Christians have believed that our Lord intended to teach the future punishment of sinners to be everlasting, and that therefore to doubt its endlessness is to suppose that He used words which He knew would be misunderstood.

For myself it would be sufficient to reply that I have never dared to teach that all will be saved; or that no punishment will be endless. I should apply the term "the lost" to those only—if such there can be—whose will hardens itself into utter and final resistance against the grace of God; although I believe that even for these "the pain of loss," not the "pain of sense," may constitute the Gehenna of their "aeonian fire," and that for these too there may be that merciful mitigation, those blessed "refrigeria," which even St. Augustine and St. Jerome did not deny.

But though the objection does not touch my own opinions, I do not think the argument tenable. For

1. There have been very large exceptions to "the

not mean "infinite woes crowned by annihilation"; and whether it is necessary to take literally this "unpitying draconian code of the future world." Leaving these questions, he proceeds to quote Akiba's words, "The duration of the punishment of sinners in Gehenna is for twelve months" (Edyoth x. 2), as being of high authority, and says that even for great criminals there are limitations of the doctrine of future retribution. The least velleity of repentance at the last moment is enough to obviate the peril; a single prescription of the law faithfully obeyed once in the life is sufficient to avert it (Sanhedr. iii.; Ikkarim iii. 20). Thus the number of sinners who are thus to be doomed, "se réduit à peu près à zéro." "Hence," he says, "that even if we interpret 'endless torments' literally, there is little in the doctrine either to terrify or to weaken our sense of the universal love of God." Speaking of Gehenna he says, "Qui ne reconnait dans ces termes l'hyperbole prophétique et poétique, qui est comme le génie de la littérature sacrée?" (p. 590); and "Rien ne semble plus incompatible avec la vraie tradition biblique qu'une éternité de souffrance et de châtiment" (p. 590).

[1] *What is of Faith*, second edition, pp. 46-48.

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mass of Christians" who have thus understood the words of our Lord. In the days of St. Augustine there were not only "some"—as he tells us—but even a very large number (*quam plurimi*) who "with human feelings compassionated the eternal punishment of the damned, and so believed that it would not take place."[1] St. Jerome tells us also that he knew of "very many" (*plerique*) who held that even the devil would be ultimately forgiven.[2] Those who, in this respect, embraced the milder views of Origen, were perhaps a majority of the then living Christians. These Fathers argue against the full extent of such compassionate inferences, but they no more categorically condemn them than Athanasius condemned Origen; and against the orthodoxy of the "party of pity" in other respects they do not even breathe a suspicion. And I suppose that there are millions of living Universalists and believers in conditional immortality in England and America—Universalists like Bishop Ewing of Argyll and Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, believers in conditional immortality like the Rev. S. Minton and the Rev. E. White—to whom it would be a most insolent slander to deny the name of Christians, though they do not understand the words of our Saviour to necessitate a belief in endless torments. Nay more, there are multitudes —and this is my own view—who, though they are not Universalists, yet do not pretend to believe that our Lord's words absolutely and demonstrably exclude an interpretation which has been adopted by hundreds of competent, learned, and saintly thinkers from the days of Origen to our own. It is one thing to fear that the evidence preponderates on the whole against the theory of Universalists, and quite another thing to refuse to admit what is just or possible in much of their exegesis.

[1] *Enchirid.* 112. "Nonnulli, immo quam plurimi."
[2] Jer. in Jon. iii. 6, 7.

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2. And Universalists, or those who believe in conditional immortality, interpreting our Lord's words in the sense which they consider to be the only admissible one, might, if this argument were of any value, retort it with great force. They might say, "We believe, and give you our reasons for believing, that our Lord's words do not bear the sense which you attach to them. If therefore He had deemed it essential that this sense should be deduced from them, He would have spoken (as He might have done in scores of different phrases) in such a manner as could not have been misunderstood. The fact that millions of true Christians have, honestly and after the utmost prayer and thought and labour, been totally unable to accept your interpretation of them, proves, on your own premisses, that it was no part of His will to teach your doctrine as a matter of faith."

3. Practically the argument amounts to this: "The interpretation of Christ's words which most Christians have accepted must be true." Is not such an hypothesis refuted by the whole history of the Christian Church? Has the acceptance of any particular interpretation by the majority of any age ever been a test of its truth?

4. And as a matter of fact does not this whole argument, which is summarised by Dr. Pusey in the words, "Jesus, being God, knew how His words would be understood," and therefore He must have *meant* His words to be understood as by the majority they have been understood—is it not a purely *à priori* hypothesis which crumbles to pieces at the touch of facts? Was not our Lord constantly, seriously, finally misunderstood, alike by His enemies and by His disciples, even in His own lifetime? Were not His literal statements evaded as being metaphors? Were not His metaphors misinterpreted to be rigid facts?

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After His very first recorded words we are told that even His mother and Joseph "understood not the saying which He spake unto them" (Luke ii. 50).

After one of His very simplest metaphors He had to ask almost with indignation, "How is it that ye do not understand?"

After one of His plainest prophecies we are told, "But they understood not that saying" (Mark ix. 32); "and it was hid from them that they perceived it not" (Luke ix. 45).

After another prophecy, if possible still plainer, "They understood none of these things" (Luke xviii. 34).

After the teaching about what doth and doth not defile a man, He complained to His apostles, "Do not ye yet understand?" (Matt. xv. 17.)

After the parable of the sheepfold and the shepherd, "They understood not what things they were which He spake unto them" (John x. 6).

After His obvious fulfilment of a plain ancient prophecy, "These things understood not His disciples at the first" (John xii. 16).

To the Jews He said, "Why do ye not understand my speech?" (John viii. 43.)

His whole life, His whole words, were long misunderstood even by those who loved Him best.

But if it be said that this misunderstanding ceased with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, I answer that undoubtedly, since then, His Church has fully known Who He was, and why He was incarnate, and that He died for us, and all of His work which is necessary for the salvation of our own souls and of the world; but to assert that the popular sense in which *special sayings* of His or of His apostles have been understood must be their sole true sense, is to ignore all the lessons of Christian history.

Has not the sense of hundreds of passages of Scripture been sought by earnest investigation, as

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to the results of which there has been a difference among Christians in all ages? And when there has been this difference among able and honest inquirers, within the limits of the Christian faith, and in questions which have always been left open by Creeds and Churches, is it not mere idle and irritating dogmatism to claim unconditional and infallible finality for our own particular conclusion?

Are we to accept the whole doctrine of transubstantiation because of the words, "This is My body"?

Are we to accept the supremacy of the Pope because of the words, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build My Church"?

Are we to revive the ruthless trials for witchcraft, which were the shame and terror of the Middle Ages, because Moses said, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"?

Are we to repeat the horrible crimes of religious persecutions because of the words, "Compel them to come in"?

Are we to burn men alive for differences of opinion because the Inquisition attached this sense to the words "is cast forth as a branch and is burned"?

Are we, because Christ said that He came "to give His life a ransom for many," to believe, as the majority of Christians seem to have believed for nearly a thousand years, that this ransom was paid to the devil?

Are we to argue that slavery is an institution of divine authority because its existence is recognised by the apostles, and because St. Paul sent back Onesimus to Philemon?

Are we to accept in all its horror the entire Calvinistic system of reprobation because St. Paul quoted the verse, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated"?[1]

[1] Rom. ix. 13; Mal. i. 2, 3.

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Yet all these words have thus by "millions upon millions" been misinterpreted and misunderstood; and I suppose that many of these millions in thus misunderstanding them supposed themselves to be acting "dutifully," and taking them "in their obvious meaning."

But here let me say that those who have been led, as they humbly believe, by the Holy Spirit of God, to embrace for mankind a wider hope than can be embraced by their fellows, and who thus interpret the words of Scripture, have a right to resent the insinuation that they must necessarily be "unorthodox" on other points. They have a right to despise as a slander the hint that they deny the Incarnation, or that our Lord was Very God. Most of all have they a right to despise such calumnies when the work which they have done, or humbly tried to do, for the cause of God and of His Christ, and of their brother Christians, and of the truth of Christianity as it is in Jesus, ought to have rendered it impossible for any true Christian to use so base a weapon against them.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE OPINIONS OF THE FATHERS.

"Redeo ad patrum commentationes de quibus hoc summatim accipe: quicquid illi dixerunt, neque ex libris sacris aut ratione aliqua satis idonea confirmaverunt, perinde mihi erit ac si quis alius e vulgo dixisset."—MILTON, *Pro Pop. Anglic. Defens.* c. iv.

"Quanto quis altius in eruditione in antiquitate Christianâ eminuit, tanto magis spem finiendorum olim cruciatum aluit atque defendit."—DÖDERLEIN, *Inst. Theol. Christ.* ii. 199.

["In Christian antiquity, the more eminent and learned a man was, in that proportion did he cherish and defend the hope that torments would at some time end."]

DR. PUSEY, in the last hundred and fifty pages of his book, has collected a valuable catena of opinions from the testimonies of the martyrs and the writings of the Fathers.

I propose to examine that catena, to show its real significance, and to add other passages which give, as it seems to me, a very different aspect to the conclusions which some would deduce from it. And such an examination is very important. It would not indeed be decisive proof of any doctrine if all the Fathers were unanimous in asserting it, unless it could be demonstrated from Scripture. Their inferences from Scripture are often much more precarious than our own, because founded on a narrower experience and a less extended knowledge. I say with Daillé, "If he adduced even six hundred passages from the Fathers, he will not thereby prove that that is the sense of Scripture which is in reality not its

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sense."[1] And if I could not endorse the somewhat arrogant language of Milton about "the obscure and entangled wood of Antiquity, Fathers and Councils fighting one against another,"[2] I yet think that the authority of the Fathers *in matters of exegesis*, considering how strange and how numerous are their errors and their fancies, has been greatly exaggerated. But in the following pages their testimony is examined, not because of its intrinsic authority—though I would not speak of that with any disrespect—but merely from the evidence which it furnishes as to the opinions of the early Christian Church.

I need enter into no controversy about the views of the Fathers, because I have no doubt that most of them believed—as I myself am compelled to believe—that in some sense some souls will be lost; will suffer for ever the pain of loss; will not attain to everlasting felicity. If that be all which these quotations be intended to prove, they only establish what I do not dispute. Further than this, there can be no doubt that after the date of the Clementine Recognitions, and increasingly during the close of the third, and during the fourth and following centuries, the abstract idea of endlessness *was* deliberately faced, and from imperfect acquaintance with the meaning and history of the word *aionios*, it was used by many writers as though it was identical in meaning with *aidios*, or "endless."

[1] Dallaeus, *De Poenis et Satisf.* p. 31.

[2] Milton, "Considerations Concerning Hirelings," *Works*, v. 384 (ed. Pickering). While I am on this subject I may refer to other passages of Milton of the same tenor. "The Labyrinth of Councils and Fathers, an entangl'd wood which the Papist loves to fight in."—"Of True Religion," v. 406. "The knotty Africanisms, the pamper'd metafors, the intricate and involv'd sentences of the Fathers, besides the fantastick and declamatory flashes, the crosse jungling periods which cannot but disturb and come thwart a settl'd devotion worse than the din of bells and rattles."—"Of Reformation," i. 31. "The foul errors, the ridiculous wresting of Scripture, the Heresies, the vanities thick sown through the volumes of Justin Martyr," &c.—*Id.* p. 19, and *passim.*

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But I am very far from sure that the absolute endlessness of punishment was in the first three centuries the fixed belief of all those writers whom Dr. Pusey has quoted; and as a matter of mere literary and historical criticism, I think that some objections might be urged against the validity of the evidence which he has adduced.

If every one of these quotations necessarily bore that meaning, they would not therefore touch anything which I have said. Neither Dr. Pusey nor Mr. Oxenham, nor any other writer who has written on this subject against Origenistic opinions, supposes that these passages exclude the notion of deliverance from *some* future retribution—whether you call it Purgatory or a probatory fire at the Day of Judgment. Not one, therefore, of these passages in any way refutes that merciful alleviation of the popular view which I aimed at bringing into prominence. The more I study the patristic aspect of the question, the more fully am I convinced that many of the earliest, the best, and the greatest of the Fathers held views very nearly identical with my own, and that my own views are nearer to those of even the greatest of the schoolmen—not only John Scotus Erigena, but even St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Peter Lombard—than those of the popular ignorance which too often proclaims itself to be the only orthodoxy. From very early days in the history of the Church, opinions, which have been branded by many as dangerous and false, have been proved to be the only true opinions by that Light which reveals all things in the slow history of their ripening.

1. It is not proven that the use of the words "eternal destruction," "eternal fire," "eternal Gehenna," "eternal death," "unquenchable fire," and other similar expressions founded on Scripture, were intended to be understood in the full sense now attached to the word "Hell." The early Fathers

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used them in the same sense that Scripture does, and there is nothing to show either that they had faced the meaning of the word "endless" or that, if the controversy had really been brought before them they would not gladly have accepted the merciful interpretations which separate the doctrine of final retribution from those accretions which have made it so abhorrent to some of the noblest of mankind. It is not therefore too much to say that nineteen-twentieths of the passages adduced by Dr. Pusey from writers of the first three, and even of the fourth, centuries have but little weight even as against Universalists, much less as against anything which I have urged. They abound in Scriptural terms which they do not define, and which may have been understood in what many maintain to be their true and not their perverted and popular sense.

2. It must be borne in mind that some of the later Fathers testify to the existence of an opinion different from their own among multitudes of Christians who were yet in full communion with the Church.[1]

3. Those who really enter into the subject, as St. Augustine and St. Jerome do, hold opinions far more merciful than the present popular teaching. St. Augustine, amid many inconsistencies, believed in something resembling Purgatory.[2] St. Jerome at least inclined to believe in the salvation of all Christians.[3]

[1] See *supra*, pp. 59, 217.

[2] "Poenae quaedam purgatoriae in illo judicio."—*Civ. Dei.* xx. 25. He says it is certainly possible, "Suffragari eis pro quibus orationes non inaniter allegantur," *Serm.* 172, and explains the object of such prayers to be "ut sit plena remissio aut certe tolerabilior fiat ipsa damnatio."—*Enchir.* 110. For proof of this see *infra*, pp. 281-295.

[3] This diversity of opinion is very remarkable. "Some of the ancients who put their hands to this work extended the benefit of this fiery purge unto all men in general; others thought fit to restrain it unto such as some way or other bore the name of Christians; others to such Christians only as had one time or other made profession of the Catholic faith; and others to such alone as did continue in that profession unto their dying day."—USHER, *Answer to a Jesuit*, vi. p. 125.

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4. Those who on this subject diverged the most widely from the view now prevalent were intellectually and in all other respects among the best and greatest and most authoritative of the Fathers. Such (among others) were St. Clemens of Alexandria, Origen, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, and, in spite of their other errors, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Diodorus of Tarsus. Thus three at least of the greatest of the ancient schools of Christian theology—the schools of Alexandria, Antioch, and Caesarea—leaned on this subject to the views of Origen, not in their details, but in their general hopefulness.

5. The more merciful opinions on some of these subjects, though notorious, and though even by that time they had been continually discussed, were not condemned by the first four General Councils; were in the case of the two Gregories never condemned at all; were not (as I shall endeavour to show) distinctly condemned (as his other errors were) even in the case of Origen; did not so much as come into discussion (as is sometimes falsely asserted) at the Fifth Oecumenical Council; and were spoken of at first, even by those who did not share in them, with perfect calmness and toleration.

6. The fact that even these Origenistic Fathers were able, with perfect honesty, to use the current phraseology shows that such phraseology was at least capable of a different interpretation from that commonly put upon it.

7. Others of the Fathers—as Hermas, St. Justin Martyr, St. Irenaeus, St. Ambrose, and Arnobius—use language of which the apparent and *primâ facie* meaning is not in accordance with the common views respecting endless torments.

8. And, lastly, there is no subject on which the Fathers speak with so little authority as this; for their views are to the last degree wavering, indefinite, and inconsistent. The Romish Church claims their

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assent to the doctrine of purgatory; but, besides what I have already remarked as to their meaning, Dr. Newman says: "They do not agree with each other, *which proves they knew little more about the matter than ourselves,* whatever they might conjecture, *that they possessed no Apostolic tradition,* only at the most entertained floating notions on the subject." The remark is only applied to purgatory,[1] but no honest reader who studies the following pages with unbiassed mind will hesitate to extend it further. The Benedictine editor, speaking of the curious opinions of St. Ambrose on the state of the dead in his *De Bono Mortis,* says: "What might seem almost incredible is *the uncertainty and inconsistency of the Holy Fathers on the subject* from the very times of the Apostles down to the pontificate of Gregory XI. and the Council of Florence, that is for nearly the whole of fourteen centuries. For not only do they differ one from the other, as commonly happens in such questions not yet defined by the Church, but they are not even consistent with themselves." This observation also admits of wider application than that of which its authors were at the moment thinking. Lastly, Bishop Forbes makes the remark that "When we turn to individual writers in the early Church we find various statements with regard to the condition of the souls of the departed; *and those not only in different writers but in the very same;* and yet some of these writers are ordinarily so consistent that their sayings have to be reconciled."[2]

I will raise no question as to the genuineness of the Acts of all the Martyrs whose words Dr. Pusey has adduced. Their expressions, in all but a few instances, are the current ones, and there is nothing to prove in what sense they interpreted them. Whatever may be their value, they have no bearing on

[1] *Tracts for the Times,* lxxix. p. 24. [2] *On the Articles,* ii. 320 *seq.*

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the critical question as to the meaning of the word "eternal"; nor are they otherwise authoritative than as evidence of a popular belief. On undecided questions which do not touch matters of faith even the most genuine and unambiguous utterances of martyrs have no intrinsic authority. There are questions on which ancient testimony is of little value. "Ships," it has been said, "are daily chartered to those antipodes which Augustine declared to be unscriptural, and Lactantius impossible, and Boniface of Metz beyond the latitude of salvation."

Now if the reader will study Dr. Pusey's catena, omitting the names of the Fathers of whom I spoke in clause 7, he will, I think, find that its whole evidential force is summed up in the following phrases:—

Second Century.[1]

ST. IGNATIUS—(† A.D. 116 [?])—"Unquenchable fire."

ST. POLYCARP—(† circ. A.D. 166)—"The perpetual torment of eternal fire."

EP. PSEUDO-BARNABAS—(circ. A.D. 120)—"The way of eternal death with punishment."

PSEUDO-CLEMENT—(Ancient Homily)—"Eternal punishment"; "unquenchable fire."

THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH—(fl. A.D. 168)—"Eternal punishments"; "everlasting fire."

Third Century.

TERTULLIAN — (circ. A.D. 216) — "Punishment which continueth not for a long time but for ever."

[1] I quote nothing from Tatian (circ. A.D. 150), because his language seems to me to be very confused. Dr. Pusey says it means "a deathless death, an immortality of ill." To me it seems contradictory. After denying the inherent immortality of the soul, he says, "If it knows not the truth it dies, and is dissolved with the body, receiving death by punishment in immortality." This looks like the doctrine of annihilation; but farther on he speaks of our "receiving the painful with immortality."

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THEODORE OF HERACLEA—(A.D. 230)—(a Semi-Arian)—"Abide for ever . . . . in punishment."

APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTIONS—"Eternal fire and endless worms."

MINUC. FELIX—(fl. circ. A.D. 230)—"Eternal punishment"; "eternal torments without either limit or end."

ST. HIPPOLYTUS—(† A.D. 238)—"Fire unquenchable and without end"; "everlasting punishment in unquenchable fire."

ST. CYPRIAN—(† A.D. 258)—"An eternal flame—pains that never cease" (perennibus poenis).

PSEUDO-CLEMENTINE RECOGNITIONS AND HOMILIES—(circ. A.D. 218)—"Tormented for ever"; "they endure without end the torment of eternal fire, and to their destruction they have not the quality of mortality"; "never dying, the soul can receive no end of its misery."

LACTANTIUS—(A.D. 320)—"They will again be clothed with flesh . . . . indestructible and abiding for ever, that it may be able to hold out against everlasting fire."

JULIUS FIRMICUS—(circ. A.D. 340)—"Perpetual punishment of torments."

ST. METHODIUS—(† A.D. 303)—"Eternal punishment, from the fiery wrath of God."

EUSEBIUS—(† A.D. 338)—"Eternal fire."

ATHANASIUS—(† A.D. 373)—"The sin against the Holy Ghost unpardonable;" "none to deliver those who in Hades are taken in their sin."

ACACIUS—(A.D. 340)—"Perpetual punishment."

ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM—(† A.D. 386)—"An eternal body fitted to endure the pains of sins, that it may burn eternally in fire."

LUCIFER OF CAGLIARI—(† circ. A.D. 370)—"Quenchless fire."

ST. HILARY—(† A.D. 367)—"Corporeal eternity—destined to the fire of judgment."

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ST. ZENO—"Everlasting punishment."

PSEUDO-CAESARIUS[1] and ST. BASIL—(† A.D. 379)—if we do not discount popular and rhetorical phrases—are decisive for endlessness. TITUS of Bosra (A.D. 352), ST. EPHRAEM (A.D. 370), speak of punishment without ending; and after this epoch, and still more after the days of St. Augustine, no one doubts that the belief in the endlessness of *some* retribution became both more definite and very widely prevalent.

1. But, looking at these passages, an Origenist would entirely refuse to admit that the expressions quoted from Ignatius, Polycarp, Pseudo-Barnabas, Theophilus of Antioch, St. Cyprian, Eusebius, Theodore of Heraclea, Acacius, Lucifer of Cagliari, and Zeno, are in the least degree decisive on the question. He would say that they merely quote the ordinary Scripture phrases, as Origen himself did, and as all the Origenists did, though they denied that these phrases meant—and some of them offered arguments to show that they could not mean—what they have most commonly been explained to mean.[2] To quote the mere phrase "eternal," in proof that an ancient writer meant endless, is to waste time. If the use of

[1] St. Caesarius († A.D. 368) was a physician, the youngest brother of St. Gregory of Nazianzus. He was not even baptised till shortly before his death. Dr. Pusey quotes his *Dialogues* as though they were indisputably genuine. Even if they were, the theological authority of a lay catechumen would not be very high. But are they? Certainly not. Almost every critic has given them up. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, who tells us so much about his brother, never says that he wrote a single line; and it is certain that he did not (as these *Dialogues* say) live twenty years at Constantinople (See Cave, *Primitive Fathers*, i. 284; Tillemont, *Orig. Art.* 39). I had already quoted the passage for its important admission that the Origenists argued for the terminability of punishment because of the very word *aionios* being used. This is a point which is in no way affected by the question of genuineness. See *infra*, p. 381.

[2] Bishop Huet, in his *Origeniana*, points out the futility of this argument (that a writer believed in "endless" because he spoke of "aeonian" punishment) 200 years ago. Origen, he says, used the same language, "hâc enim voce longius sed finiendum tempus intellexit." —*Origeniana*, p. 233.

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these expressions, especially in perfectly general and often purely rhetorical passages, is to be held decisive, then no one has ever been an Origenist, not even Origen himself. Many of the passages quoted, *e.g.* that from St. Athanasius, have no real bearing on the question at issue. There is strong sense in the remark of Petavius as regards the attempt to show that Origen was not an Origenist because he used such expressions as "eternal," &c. "Nihil," he says, "hoc genere defensionis levius est"; and he shows that Origen did use this language, but attached to it an entirely different sense, believing that even after the "eternal judgment," and after the future age, there would be a final restoration. A sin may be unpardonable, and may involve endless loss, without at all involving the agonies of endless torments in hell.

2. On the other hand, there is no question whatever that Tertullian, Minucius Felix, the author of the Pseudo-Clementines, Cyril, and many of the later writers quoted, did believe that "eternal" meant "endless"; but an Origenist might fairly ask, How does their belief affect me?[1] They are writers who are not entitled to any great respect. The first indisputable trace of this view occurs in the fierce pages of the Montanist Tertullian, whose "devoutly ferocious disposition" offered a fitting engine for its propagation. It then reappears in Minucius Felix, together with the hideous theory—of which there is

[1] "Fatentur illi Deum intendere peccatoribus contumacibus poenas aeternas . . . sed aiunt propterea Deum jus remittendarum, si videatur, poenarum, nequaquam amisisse. Sic carceri perpetuo addicentur rei quos postea summa potestas, si velit, liberat. Sic leges feruntur aeternae, quas tamen legislator abrogare potest."—*Theod. Alethinus* (ad Petav. *l. c.*). This, however, was rather the argument of later writers, and is the one adopted by Archbishop Tillotson, and by Less, *Dogm.* p. 587. This argument (*e.g.* that a man may be condemned, and justly, to "penal servitude for life," and yet may, without any falsity or injustice, be liberated before death) does not, I think, occur so early as Origen's time.

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not a trace in Scripture—that the fire of torment is miraculously created to renew what it destroys, in order that the agony may be endless.[1] It finds its first formal elaboration in the Pseudo-Clementines,[2] malicious Ebionite fictions, written in a spirit of intense hatred to St. Paul, whom they covertly slander under the name of Simon Magus.[3] We next find it in the ill-instructed layman Lactantius, who, with other writers, begins to adopt the new and unwarrantable theory of the body specially immortalised to resist the consumption of material fire. Afterwards no doubt these theories, of which Scripture says nothing, were idly repeated by multitudes without examination and without thought. Are we (an Origenist might ask) to accept these un-Scriptural accretions on authority so poor and so questionable, when the authors of them do not offer the shadow of an argument in their favour? Testimonies like these are mere ciphers. Is Tertullian, who lapsed into heresy, and Minucius Felix, a Roman lawyer of little theological knowledge, and the forgers of the Clementines, who were both heretics and slanderers, and "the Christian Cicero," who is constantly hovering on the verge of heresies due to imperfect training, and Cyril, of whom one prefers to say as little as possible—are these men to be taken as authoritative interpreters of the sense to be put upon the Scriptural expressions of other Fathers? Is it because of their *ipse dixit* that you try to impose on my conscience human inventions

[1] So, too, Lactantius, *Instt.* vii. 21. "Divinus ignis una eademque vi et potentia et cremabit impios et recreabit, et quantum e corporibus absumet tantum reponit, et sibi ipse aeternum pabulum subministrabit."—See *supra, infra,* p. 455.

[2] Yet in *Ps. Clem. Hom.* iii. 6, we find, "For they cannot endure for ever who have been impious against the one God."

[3] Von Cöln in Ersch u. Gruber, *Encyclop.* xviii. 35. "In den Clementinen herrscht eine weit entschiedener sich aussprechende Polemik gegen die Person und Lehre des Apostel Paulus als in den Recognitionen."—SCHLIEMANN, *Clement.* p. 96, *seq.*; LIGHTFOOT, *Galatians,* p. 306, *seq.*; STANLEY, *Corinthians,* p. 366, *seq.*

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founded on false inferences and false interpretation —the "sentient fire" and the "salted body"—which my moral sense cannot but abhor?

3. Further, it might be shown that many even of these writers did not accept the post-Reformation dogma of hell with no purgatorial punishment. Thus St. Cyril of Jerusalem [1] speaks of a fire which shall test as well as a fire which shall punish, and, like many other Fathers, derived this view from 1 Cor. iii. 13. Thus too Caesarius of Arles says that sinners are "to be tormented for a long period, that they may come to eternal life without wrinkle or spot." [2]

4. Lastly,—besides the indecisiveness of many of them,—let us notice that the testimonies quoted by Dr. Pusey, as they grow in definiteness and horror with each succeeding century, until we come at last to the unmitigated atrocities of the Dialogues of Gregory the Great, the Elucidarium, the writings of Bede, and the vision of Dante, are drawn mainly from the post-Apostolic Fathers. The silence, or entire vagueness, or distinct counter-testimony of the Apostolic Fathers is not without deep significance. From the earliest of them all—*St. Clemens Romanus* —Dr. Pusey cannot quote one relevant word. He devotes three chapters to the Resurrection (Ep. 26-28); but like St. Paul, St. James, and St. John in their Epistles, does not say a single word about the hopeless fate of sinners, still less as to their endless torment.[3] The one expression in the letters of the Pseudo-Barnabas is not only indecisive, but must be at least modified by the apparent belief in the destruction of the wicked which seems to be indicated by the phrase that "the day is at hand in which all things will be destroyed along with the hopeless wicked one," and the more so because he contrasts

[1] Cyril Hieros. *Catech.* 15. πῦρ δοκιμαστικὸν τῶν ἀνθρώπων.
[2] Caesar. Arelat. *Hom.* viii. 3.
[3] The word "judgments" in c. 27 refers to temporal judgments.

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the "resurrection" of the blessed with the "retribution" of the wicked.[1] From St. Polycarp nothing can be quoted except the words which he is reported to have said at his martyrdom—words respecting the genuineness and accuracy of which we can feel no certainty whatever, and which are not decisive even if we could.

But now look at the names which for the present I have passed over—the names of Hermas, St. Justin Martyr, St. Irenaeus, St. Clemens of Alexandria, Origen. Who would deny that these writers are of incomparably higher authority than any of those mentioned in the last paragraph? Yet every one of them—not to mention Tatian and Arnobius—has written words which at least seem to run counter to the theory of unending material agony, which first makes its appearance under such questionable sanction.

1. HERMAS, if a fanciful, was a deeply pious writer of the first century. His famous book, *The Shepherd*, is quoted as Scripture by St. Irenaeus,[2] and was read publicly in the churches.[3] Hermas, in the Parable of the Tower, certainly taught a possible amelioration after death[4]; for a possibility of "repentance," and so of being ultimately built into the tower, is granted to some of the rejected stones.[5] Others, again, of stones which have been thrown farther away, will be built, though "in another and much inferior place, and that only when they have been tortured, and have completed the days of their sins." There is much more to the same effect, both in the Visions and in the Similitudes. In the sixteenth chapter of the Ninth Similitude Hermas tells us of certain stones which came out of the pit, and were applied to the

[1] *Ep. Barn.* c. 21. [2] *Adv. Haer.* iv. 20, p. 253.
[3] Euseb. *H. E.* iii. 3, v. 8.
[4] After careful study of the *Pastor* of Hermas this seems to me almost indisputable.
[5] *Pastor, Vis.* iii. 2, 5. See too *Simil.* ix. 8.

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building of the Tower, because they had been made "to know the name of the Son of God" by means of "the Apostles and teachers who preached the name of the Son of God, after falling asleep in the power of faith of the Son of God,—preached it not only to those who were asleep, but themselves also gave them the seal of the preaching."[1] And again, "Some of them then descended into the water, but these [Christ and the Apostles] descended living, and living ascended; but those who had died before descended dead, but ascended living."[2] In this passage it is surely impossible not to see the theory, which is again found in St. Clement of Alexandria, and to which Bishop Butler alludes, that inferior souls may be saved, or improved, hereafter by the agency of superior ones.[3] This theory is not indeed to be found in Scripture; but it was inferred, not unnaturally, and in very early days, from the doctrine of Christ's descent into hell. Lastly, when Hermas says that "non-repentance involves death," and that "as many as do not repent, but abide in their deeds, shall utterly perish," he is using language which may indeed be interpreted of "eternal condemnation," but which (as a matter of literary criticism) surely cannot be proved to exclude the interpretation which is put upon it by those whom, for brevity's sake, we may sometimes call Annihilationists.

2. ST. JUSTIN MARTYR († circ. A.D. 165) repeatedly uses the expression "eternal fire," and in one place "the endless suffering of eternal fire,"[4] and argues

[1] Hermas, *Vis.* iii.; *Simil.* ix. 16.

[2] Id. *Past.* iii. *ib.* See on this Clem. Alex. *Strom.* ii. 277; vi. 460.

[3] Butler, *Analogy*, i. c. 3. "This happy effect of virtue would have a tendency by way of example, and possibly in other ways, to amend those of them" ["vicious creatures in any distant scene or period throughout the universal kingdom of God"] "who are capable of amendment." The same notion is found in the Rabbis. See the quotation from Jalkuth Koheleth, *supra*, p. 204.

[4] ἀπαύστως κολάζεσθαι, *Apol.* p. 264. It is remarkable that when the Fathers wish (even in rhetorical or popular language) to indicate this

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(if it can be called argument) that if there be no "eternal fire," there is no God! I cannot see that he necessarily meant "endless" in all its strictness, even though he uses *aidios*, and contrasts "eternal" with "a period of a thousand years only."[1] Indeed, if he be so understood, his argument becomes perfectly senseless. It is quite intelligible to say that "if there be no *future retribution* there is no God"; but it is nothing better than nonsense to say that "if there be no *endless torment* there is no God." And moreover Justin accepts the words which he puts into the mouth of the "aged man" by whom he was converted, who, denying the inherent immortality of the soul, says, "Such as are worthy to see God die no more, but others shall undergo punishment as long as it shall please Him that they shall exist and be punished."[2] I must confess—respectfully as I would weigh the arguments of Mr. H. N. Oxenham, and of Dr. Pusey, and of those whom they follow—that these words still seem to me to imply an opinion on the part of St. Justin that at the end of a certain time, defined by the will of God, the punishment of souls shall cease either by the cessation of their existence or the removal of their punishment. Such would certainly be the interpretation of the words by any unbiased reader reading them for the

conception they always have to deviate into such unscriptural phrases as ἀπαύστως, &c.—See *Apol.* lii. lxi. lxvii.

[1] αἰωνίαν κόλασιν . . ἀλλ' οὐχὶ χιλιονταετῆ περίοδον.—*Apol.* i. p. 57.

[2] αἱ δὲ κολάζονται, ἕς τ' ἂν αὐτὰς καὶ εἶναι καὶ κολάζεσθαι ὁ Θεος θέλῃ. —*Dial. c. Tryph.* p. 223. In *Dial.* p. 224, the old man says, "When this union" (of soul and body) "is to be dissolved, the soul quits the body and the man no longer exists; so when the soul is no longer to exist, the vital spirit departs from it, and it exists no longer" (οὐκ ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ ἔτι), "but departs thither whence it was taken." Bishop Kaye (*Just. Mart.* p. 102) admits that "the former mode of expression implies the possibility that the torments of the wicked may have an end." Even if he be right in saying that Justin did not accept this opinion (and certainly, if he did, his language is not quite consistent), still the testimony to the unreproved antiquity of the opinion in the Christian Church is important.

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first time. Such, in point of fact, is the interpretation put on this and other passages which I shall quote from other Fathers, not only by such orthodox writers as Petavius, but also by a divine of such high authority as Huet, Bishop of Avranches.[1] It is not too much to say that no one could have understood the passages which I shall quote from Irenaeus, Ambrose, Ambrosiater, and Jerome in any other sense, but for the desire of getting rid of their obvious meaning. "This idea," says Rothe, "is very ancient in the Church. Even Hermas, Justin Martyr, and Arnobius thought that God would annihilate the lost."[2]

But, it is argued, St. Justin cannot mean to imply that souls would ever cease to exist, because of his previous words, "Souls never perish, for this would be indeed a godsend to the wicked."[3] Surely this argument is indecisive. St. Justin would have been strictly consistent if he meant that they never perish *of themselves;* never perish apart from the express will of God. And I am the more inclined to think that this may be his meaning, because elsewhere he says that "they only will attain to immortality who lead holy and virtuous lives." Certainly this would be a contradiction of the next words, that the wicked "will be punished in aeonian fire," if aeonian necessarily meant endless, but not otherwise. Both Mr. Oxenham and Dr. Pusey believe in purgatory. Neither of them, therefore, would, I suppose, argue that St. Justin excludes the idea of purgatory when he says that "others" (*i.e.* such as are not worthy to see God) "shall be punished as long as it shall please God that they shall be punished"; for certainly they cannot prove that "those who, at death, are unworthy to see God," can only mean the wicked who, at death, are doomed to hell. If, then, the latter words may mean a terminable *punishment,* why may

[1] See Huet, *Origeniana*, p. 231 (in Delarue, *Opp. Orig.* iv.).
[2] *Dogmatik*, iii. 158.
[3] *Apol.* xii. § 29.

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not the former words imply — "if God will it" — a terminable *existence?*[1] But this, they say, is "heresy." Be it so, if they like to call it so, for not being an "Annihilationist" any more than I am an "Universalist," I must leave the defence of that view to those who hold it. But the question is not whether or not it has been subsequently pronounced to be "heresy," but whether it is, or is not, the plain meaning—whether he were consistent with himself or inconsistent—of St. Justin's words. That is a literary and a critical question on which no mere dictum, however severe, will be taken as decisive.[2]

3. I come to ST. IRENAEUS.

Respecting his testimony, and that of all other writers, I may here claim the application of two principles: (1) that his current phraseology must be always interpreted by any special limitation which, in any particular passage, he lays down respecting it; and (2) that the apparent meaning of a passage is not to be set aside on the plea that it disaccords with the meaning, real or supposed, of other passages.

(1) The first principle is surely one of common sense. I may use common expressions which are now understood in a particular manner; but if in any passage I define or explain the sense in which I employ them, the meaning of this definition or limitation is not to be overruled by the supposed meaning of my general expressions: on the contrary, they are to be explained in accordance with it. The sense of twelve, or any number of vague passages is to be explained by one definite passage; not it by them.

[1] Comp. *Apol.* ii. 7, p. 46. "God delays the . . . dissolution of the world so that evil angels and demons and men may cease to be" (μηκέτι ὦσι).

[2] When I referred in a very summary sentence of my *Sermons* (p. 84) to Justin Martyr as one of those Fathers who held a view "more or less analogous" to Universalism, I was thinking of this passage as implying Purgatory for some, extinction for others.

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(2) As to the second principle: If Origen was inconsistent; if both the two great and eloquent Gregories were inconsistent; if even St. Augustine—elaborately as he discusses the question—is far from being rigidly consistent[1]—why may not St. Irenaeus have been inconsistent, who equalled them in goodness, but was incomparably beneath them in power and learning? On this subject a mind which, however feeble, yet earnestly desires to be fair, can hardly help wavering within certain limits. The "inconsistencies" on this subject which have been so freely charged against many modern writers, and against myself, simply arise from the desire to be fair to all theories, and from the apparent antinomies of Scripture, which do not render it possible (to my mind) to lay down a series of absolutely consistent and indisputable conclusions.

Dr. Pusey again and again seems to be writing on the assumption that it was not possible for a Father to change his opinion, or to express, at different times, opinions which differed widely from each other. Few, I think, will hold him to be justified in this assumption. Writers, both ancient and modern, are inconsistent with themselves in their eschatological teaching. Redepenning, in his well-known work on Origen, rightly says that, in the early Fathers especially, we find "elements entirely irreconcilable near one another, or mixed with one another, and the contradictions left for the most part unresolved."[2]

Now St. Irenaeus (of course) uses the phrase "eternal punishment," or "eternal fire," as all use those phrases who accept the Bible; and in one passage he says that "the good things of God, being eternal and endless, the privation of them also is eternal and endless." Certainly this passage shows his

[1] "Ut enim qui semel iterumque in scribendo lapsus est, non enim sequitur ubique esse lapsum."—*Petav. l. c.* iii. 6, § 12.

[2] *Origenes*, i. 90.

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opinion that the "pain of loss" (as we all believe) may be eternal and endless; though if "eternal" (*aionios*) meant endless (*ateleutetos*), then the latter word is pure tautology. That phrase inclines me to believe that St. Irenaeus adopted the high Johannine sense of the word *aionios*, taken alone, though he added to it the connotation of endlessness.[1] The multiplication of such passages would not have weighed a feather in the mind of Origen even as evidence, much less as argument. He would have asked, "Why should not Irenaeus have interpreted Scriptural words in what I believe to be their real sense, which we may well suppose that he knew by tradition from St. John?" But when we come to a definite statement, what does St. Irenaeus say? Commenting on the words, "prepared for the devil and his angels," he says that it implies that "not for man, in the first place, was prepared the eternal fire, but for him who beguiled man . . . However, those too will justly receive it who, like them [Satan and his angels], persevere in works of wickedness without repentance and without return." Do these words mean only persevere until death? If we assume that they do, let us turn to another passage in the same book, where St. Irenaeus again draws a contrast between Satan and man; he says that "God hated Satan, but by slow degrees took pity on man. Wherefore also He cast man out of Paradise . . . not as grudging him the Tree of Life . . . but in pity on him that he might not last for ever as a sinner; and that the sin which was in him might not be immortal, and an infinite and incurable evil." Mr. Oxenham and Dr. Pusey tell us with absolute confidence, that these words only allude to an immortality in a sinful

[1] It is needless to remark that ἀτελευτητὸς and δηνεκής, the words used by Irenaeus, are in this application unsanctioned by Scripture, as are also such phrases as ἀπέραντος τιμωρία, αἰώνιος τιμωρία (Theoph.), ἀθάνατα βασανίζομαι (Basil), κόλασις εἰς ἀπείρους αἰῶνας (Chrys.), and others used by the later Fathers.

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state *on earth.* It may be so, but I do not see why an *earthly* immortality should more necessarily have made his sin "an infinite and incurable evil." It may be held that St. Irenaeus meant that by eating of the Tree of Life Adam would have obtained an *inherent* immortality, in which case—apart from the repentance which was left to his own free will—his sin would have been an incurable evil; whereas, excluded from the Tree of Life, he might, as St. Justin says, have lived only as long as it shall please God that he should exist. And this would precisely accord with the *primâ facie* sense of the other passage, that life is not of ourselves, nor of our own nature, but is given according to the grace of God. "Wherefore he who shall have preserved the gift of life, and been thankful to the Giver, shall receive also length of days for ever and ever. But whoso shall have cast it away, and become unthankful to his Maker, even because he was made, and will not recognise Him that bestoweth it, that man deprives himself of perseverance for ever."[1] Of "perseverance in happiness," says the translator; of "perseverance in good," says Mr. Oxenham; "of which St. Irenaeus says the wicked render themselves for ever incapable."[2] In fact they interpret this passage solely of divine life, as they interpreted the other solely of earthly life. But Irenaeus is not talking about perseverance in good at all, but of the wicked, who have flung away all good. Had his meaning been that which Dr. Pusey and Mr. Oxenham attribute to him, he would surely have said that the wicked deprive themselves of all *recovery*, not of all *perseverance* in what (confessedly) they have not got. Nor does Mr. Oxenham clinch his argument by quoting from the heading of the chapter that "souls are immortal." Irenaeus meant (as he expressly says) that immortality is not an inherent quality of souls, but the gift of God; and he therefore clearly held that He who gives

[1] *Iren.* ii. 34, p. 169. [2] *Catholic Eschatology*, p. 113.

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could also take away. The gloss which they put on the passage may be correct: but I appeal to any unbiased arbiter to say whether it does not subject the language to a very severe strain, and whether the other contention is not the more obvious? If the annihilation theory, which is also found in Arnobius,[1] had not been subsequently treated as heresy, I greatly doubt whether any one would have interpreted the words otherwise. Bishop Jeremy Taylor and Bishop Huet, among many other divines quite equal in learning and power to Dr. Pusey, understood these passages of Justin Martyr and Irenaeus without the smallest doubt or hesitation, exactly as I have understood them.[2] Nor can I admit that such an explanation renders Irenaeus so inconsistent with himself as is asserted. I referred to these passages as clearly seeming to imply either the ultimate redemption (from bondage), or the total destruction of sinners. Dr. Pusey mistakes my disjunctive; I did not mean the two clauses to be co-extensive. I meant that these passages of St. Irenaeus seemed to me to imply that some sinners would have a terminable punishment (which Dr. Pusey also believes in the form of purgatory); that others would only exist "as long as God should please." So then "endless punishment" (for some) and "terminable punishment" (for some) are not contradictory theories; and Dr. Pusey is mistaken in making me say that St. Irenaeus anywhere implied "universal restoration." He does not do so, and I never said he did. But though I have never leaned to the theory of annihilation, that does not make me at all sure that no such thought lies in these passages of St. Justin and St. Irenaeus. My references were thoroughly justified, and I still adhere to the natural sense of the passages to which I referred.

[1] Arnob. *Adv. Gent.* ii. 14.
[2] Jer. Taylor, *Sermons* (*Works*, iv. 43.); Huet, *ubi supra.*

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4. Two passages are quoted in which ST. CLEMENS OF ALEXANDRIA uses the phrases "eternal death" and "the punishment of eternity." The former is not a Scriptural phrase; but (as I have said) controversially speaking, both phrases count for absolutely nothing until it is shown that Clemens could not have understood "eternal" exactly as Origen understood it. But the three passages to which I had referred are as follows: In my *Sermons*—speaking generally of various Fathers—I said that they taught a view "more or less analogous" to Universalism.[1] In the *Excursus* (p. 157) I said that "though Clemens does not express himself with perfect distinctness, yet the whole drift of his remarks proves that he could not have held an unmitigated doctrine of endless punishment, but only of a punishment which would necessarily cease when its remedial object was attained," and that, "like Origen, he seems to imply an ultimate amendment of every evil nature." Again and again I have been fiercely taunted with ignorance, with excitedness, with rhetoric, with want of precision: I am quite willing to admit these or any other faults where they exist; I neither put forth nor have ever put forth, any claims whatever, of even the humblest kind, for myself or my writings. But here is the evidence to which I referred in proof of what I said. Let every fair mind judge whether I had sufficient ground for my remarks or not.

Here then is a passage which still seems to me "more or less analogous" to Universalism.

a. St. Clemens devotes three chapters of the first book of the *Paedagogus* "to all who think that the just is not good." They are of course much too long to quote, but let any one read them through, and then say that their large and merciful drift does not tend to a wider hope for sinners than can be excluded by his use of the two vague phrases, "everlasting

[1] *Eternal Hope*, p. 84.

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death" and "the punishment of eternity." If however he has any doubt on the subject, let him turn to the principal work of St. Clemens, the *Stromata*, where, among the many proofs which he adduces to show that the Greeks had borrowed their wisdom from the Hebrews, he quotes from the Comedian Diphilus the lines "about the judgment," in which he speaks of the two paths to Hades—that of the just and that of the impious—and of the final universal conflagration; and then adds "and tragedy is concordant with these," and quotes the passage which ends with—"And then He shall save all things which He formerly destroyed."[1]

β. It is true that St. Clemens is only quoting, but he is quoting with approval, and he probably meant these lines to allude to the restitution of all things. For in an earlier passage he compares the partial designs and energies of evil to bodily diseases "which are guided by the general providence to a wholesome end, even if the cause be unhealthy": and he proceeds to argue that it would be "the highest greatness of divine Providence not to permit the permanence of the useless and unprofitable evil which sprang from voluntary apostasy; . . . . for it is the work of divine wisdom and virtue and power not only to do good—for this, so to speak, is the nature of God, as it is of fire to warm and of light to illuminate,—but the following especially, (namely) by means of the evils devised by some to accomplish some good and blessed end, and to use beneficially the things that seem vile."[2] Further, let the reader study the second chapter of the second book of the *Stromata*, on the universality of Christ's rule and His tender love and care for men. Finally let him consider the following passages. Speaking of the futility of the notion that the gods requited robbers and tyrants with good because of their burnt offerings; he adds—

[1] *Strom.* v. 14, § 123.

[2] *Strom.* i. 7, § 86.

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"But we say that the fire sanctifies not the flesh, but the sinful souls, meaning thereby not that all-consuming and vulgar fire, but the intelligential fire (φρονιμόν) which passeth through the soul that cometh through the fire." (*Strom.* vii. 6, p. 34 *ad fin.*)[1]

And again:—

"All things have been appointed by the Lord of all for the salvation of all, both in general and in particular. . . Necessary discipline, by the goodness of the great overseeing Judge, through the proximate angels, through various previous judgments, through the final judgments, compels even those who have entirely despaired to repent."[2]

In a fragment of his commentary on 1 John ii. 2, dwelling on the death of Christ "for the whole world," he says, "Accordingly He saves indeed all, but by converting some by means of punishments, but others who follow with spontaneous will, and in accordance with the worthiness of His honour 'that every knee may be bent to Him, of celestial, terrestrial, and infernal things,'[3]—that is angels, men, and souls which before His coming passed from this temporal life."[4]

Again, explaining various beatitudes, he says on "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted" (παρακληθήσονται)—"For those that repented for the evils of their previous life shall be present at the calling; for that is the meaning of παρακληθῆναι. Now the ways of the penitent are twofold,—the commoner [is] fear at what he has done, but the more special, the soul's shame with reference to itself arising from conscience, *whether it be here or even elsewhere*, since no place is vacant of the well-doing of God."[5]

Again, speaking of punishment, he draws a very

[1] On this passage see Bishop Kaye's *St. Clement*, and Dr. Newman's *Essay on Development*, p. 306.

[2] *Strom.* vii. 7 (p. 835, ed. Potter). See Bishop Kaye's *Clemens of Alex.* p. 208.

[3] Phil. ii. 10.

[4] *Fragm.* ed. Potter, p. 1,009.

[5] *Strom.* iv. 6, § 37.

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real distinction between *kolasis*, which is the normal Scripture word, and *timoria* (vengeance), which occurs once only, and then of the most hopeless apostates, in Hebrews x. 29. "Punishment," he says, "is for the good and advantage of him who is being punished, for it is the amendment of one who resists; but vengeance (*timoria*) is a requital of evil, sent for the interest of the avenger. Now He would not desire to avenge Himself on us, who teaches us to pray for those who despitefully use us."[1]

Once more, it is not insignificant to notice that St. Clemens was perhaps the earliest to speak quite distinctly (for the allusion of Hermas is not so clear) of the belief that the Apostles, as well as our Lord, preached to the dead—and even to the sinful dead—in Hades, and thereby gave them at least the chance of repentance.[2]

Moreover there is another argument unnoticed by those who vainly attempt to explain away these passages of St. Clemens. His book called *Hypotyposes*, or "Sketches," has not come down to us, and the history of it is obscure. But Photius tells us that in that book he taught the doctrine of metempsychosis. If that be so, does it not prove that the supposed unanimity on these subjects in the ancient Church is very much exaggerated? The opinions of the Fathers differed, just as ours do, within the limits of every tenable interpretation of phrases which they all employed. Neither they nor we possess more than a few general conclusions respecting a subject which it has pleased God to reveal to us only in its barest outline.

[1] *Paedag.* i. 8, § 70, and *passim;* and compare with this passage the merciful sentiments of *Strom.* vii. chapters xiii., xiv., and xvi.; and respecting the sole true function of punishment, *Strom.* vi. 38, p. 768, ed. Potter. This view of punishment is invariably found in St. Clemens. See Baur, *Dogmengesch.* i. 718.

[2] See *Strom.* vi. 6. *οἱ ἐν ᾅδου καταγέντες καὶ εἰς ἀπώλειαν ἑαυτοὺς ἐκδεδωκότες . . αὐτοὶ τοιγὺν εἰσὶν οἱ ἐπακούσαντες τῆς θείας δυνάμεώς τε καὶ φωνῆς.* Also *Strom.* ii.

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Lastly, there is so close an analogy between the entire philosophic and theological views of St. Clemens and Origen that, even apart from these proofs, there would have been at least a strong presumption in favour of the master having held a view which was a keystone in the closely allied system of the pupil.

Here, then, is my evidence for what I said. Let all fair readers judge whether both isolated passages of this learned Father and the entire drift of his teaching do not point to a hope larger than that of popular theology. He does not lay down any dogma of Universalism. I never said he did. But he does use some arguments which logically tend in that direction, and are certainly not to be swept aside because he fully admits (as we all do) a future retribution, and in one passage uses the word *aidios*. "But he is thereby referring," says Dr. Pusey, "to the fire of the day of judgment (1 Cor. iii. 13), and to Christ's descent into hell." Be it so: the admission of those doctrines, in the full significance which was given to them by many of the Fathers, is all that I desire. But his arguments point and tend—and especially the passages about punishment to which I referred,[1] but which neither Mr. Oxenham nor Dr. Pusey notice—to those views for which alone I pleaded:—views which admit the possibility of alleviations after death, and which are far more merciful than the mass of popular accretions which constitute the ordinary conceptions of an endless hell.

Reserving Origen for a separate chapter, I will quote one passage from ARNOBIUS. If he was, "though sincere, yet never well instructed," he may well pair off with Tatian, or Lactantius, or Minutius Felix. He says:—

"For they [certain souls] are hurled down, and having been reduced to nothing, vanish in the frustration of a perpetual destruction, for they are of

[1] *Eternal Hope*, p. 158.

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intermediate quality, and such as can perish if they have not known the God of life." (*Adv. Gentes*, ii. 14.)

Can there be any reasonable doubt as to the opinion of Arnobius? Was it not that these souls would be annihilated? His opinion, it will be answered, is of no importance. It is at least of as much importance as those of other authors whom Dr. Pusey quotes; and if of no importance as authority, it will not be denied that it is important as evidence. It appears, then, that this Christian apologist did not hold endless torments to be a matter of faith. Does his opinion throw no light on the passages of Tatian, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus? If so, is not the consensus, built so largely on mere disputable phrases, a little weakened? Again, I say, let all fair readers judge.

5. That ST. ATHANASIUS believed—just as we do—that some souls might "perish everlastingly," I have little doubt; though it could not be proved by the allusion to the unpardonable sin, or the reference to Matt. xxv. 46, which Dr. Pusey adduces. But, so far as I am aware, he alludes but once in all his writings to Origen's eschatology, and that but obliquely, speaking of that great and good man in a manner thoroughly tolerant and respectful, with the epithets of "wonderful and most laborious."[1] Had Origen's theory of Restoration (which it must never be forgotten was something far more questionable than even Universalism, and incomparably more dubious than the Catholic opinion that there is such thing as a terminable retribution) been in the eyes of the early Church the deadly and dangerous error which some have supposed it to be, would Athanasius have contented himself with one slight allusion to it accompanied by a compliment to the author?[2] Would Origen's bitter

[1] See Cave, *Lives of the Primitive Fathers*, i. 23.
[2] *De Commun. essent.* § 49.

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enemy, Epiphanius, more than a full century later, *have passed it over absolutely without mention in the list of errors which he discovered, or imagined, or inferred that he had discovered in the writings of Origen?*

6. We now come to ST. GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS; and to his teaching and that of St. Gregory of Nyssa, I ask special attention.

In his ordinary teaching he uses the current Scriptural expressions and allusions, and others founded on them, and does not always shrink even from the popular use of the unscriptural word *aidios*.[1] Now this is what Dr. Pusey chooses to call his "positive teaching"; and he says that it requires "that inferences should not be drawn from others so as to contradict these passages," because St. Gregory "was not one who would positively assert what he did not certainly believe."[2] "Such passages," he says, "are those adduced by Petavius, according to his wont of disparaging individual Fathers." But Petavius has not "set down aught in malice" here. He gives the natural interpretation to the passages, and it is clear that the more general phrases must be taken with reference to the more distinct assertions.

Mr. Oxenham admits that St. Gregory Nazianzen is "inconsistent," and that he gives "hints" in the direction of Origenism[3]; but he says (1) that these "hints" must be interpreted by supposing that he had not so clear a grasp of Catholic doctrine as he would have had if he had lived after the condemnation of Origenism; and (2) that though he and St. Gregory of Nyssa do give some real countenance to the Origenist view, "here, as in other cases, the exception proves the rule"! I reply that (1) even if "Origenism" was condemned, I have never found any condemnation of Origen's general hope for man-

[1] σκώληξ ἐκεῖθεν ἐσθίων ἀϊδίως.—*Carm. Iamb.* xix. ἀΐδιος only in Jude vi. (Rom. i. 20).
[2] P. 211.
[3] *Catholic Eschatology*, p. 114, second edition.

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kind apart from the opinions with which he mixed it up; and that (2) the exception in this instance proves a good deal, whether (according to the absurd popular phrase) it proves the rule or not.

Before proceeding, let the reader see what St. Gregory of Nazianzus actually says:—

a. At the end of his thirty-ninth oration, attacking the Novatians for their severity, he threatens them with a baptism of penal fire after death, and says:—

"Let them, then, if they will, walk in our way and in Christ's. If not, let them walk in their own way. Perchance there they will be baptised with the fire, with that last, that more laborious, and longer baptism, which devours the substance like hay, and consumes the lightness of all evil."[1]

Dr. Pusey says that this refers to the last-day fire of 1 Cor. iii. 13, and so to temporary punishment. I quite agree with him. There is no necessary Universalism in the passage, but it grants me all that I have ever desired,—namely, the tenability of a belief for which, in reality, Dr. Pusey is pleading just as much as I am, that a soul may pass into punishment after death, and yet that punishment not be final. The particular name given to that punishment is surely not essential. In ordinary language, the untenable character of which I was trying to prove, all penal fire after death is called "hell." Dr. Pusey argues that "hell" when incurred by any soul is a final, irreversible, and endless doom; but if he believes that there is—whether at, or before, the day of judgment—a purifying and penal fire which is not endless, he is granting the very thing which it was the main object of my Sermons to establish. I will not therefore pause to dwell on the fact that the

[1] *οὗτοι μὲν οὖν εἰ μὲν βούλοιντο, τὴν ἡμετέραν ὁδὸν καὶ Χριστοῦ· εἰ δὲ μὴ τὴν ἑαυτῶν πορευέσθωσαν· τυχὸν ἐκεῖ τῷ πυρὶ βαπτισθήσονται, τῷ τελευταίῳ βαπτίσματι, τῷ ἐπιπονωτέρῳ καὶ μακροτέρῳ· ὃ ἐσθίει ὡς χορτὸν τὴν ὕλην καὶ δαπανᾷ πάσης κακίας κουφότητα.—Orat.* xxxix. p. 690, Ben.

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Novatians, whose case St. Gregory is speaking of, are supposed to die in heresy, and in a way which is not "the way of Christ"; and that Petavius not only understands him to be speaking of "the lost," but asserts that he was similarly understood by St. Chrysostom, Photius, Theophylact, Jerome, and the Council of Florence.[1]

β. But though I differ from Petavius' view about this passage, I still think with him that St. Gregory of Nazianzus was deeply influenced with Origenist opinions: one who was not so would not have referred to Universalism without the least condemnation, as he does, at the close of his poem about his life, where he says that God "brings the dead to another life as partakers either of fire or of God's illuminating light. But whether even all shall hereafter partake of God, let it be discussed elsewhere."[2]

No one, I think, would say that this last suggestion was here regarded as untenable—much less as heretical; nor can Petavius be accused of malice in thinking that it indicates a leaning to the view of Universal Restoration. Especially as St. Gregory Nazianzen *has* discussed the question elsewhere, so far at any rate as to use the following very remarkable words. After speaking of a "cleansing fire" of Christ, which consumes what is material and evil dispositions he adds:—

"I know also a fire not purgatorial but penal, whether that fire of Sodom which God raineth on all sinners, mingled with brimstone and tempest; or that which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; or that which goes before the face of the Lord, and shall burn up His enemies round about; and one

[1] "*Apparet* damnatorum et in aliâ quam in Christi viâ decedentium, hoc est in haeresi morientium, poenas *nequaquam sempiternas* constitui, tametsi longissimae sint."—PETAV. *De Angelis*, iii. 7, § 13.

[2] εἰ δὲ Θεοῦ καὶ ἅπαντας ἐσύστερον, ἄλλοθι κείσθω.—*Carm. Her.* i. *De Vita, ad fin.*

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which is still more fearful than these, which have been joined with the sleepless worm, a fire which is not quenched, but is co-enduring with the wicked. For all these things pertain to the force of destruction, unless any one likes, even in this instance, to understand this more humanely and worthily of Him who punishes."[1]

Now the remark of Petavius on this passage is, "It is manifest that in this place Gregory Nazianzen doubted about the pains of the damned, whether they would be endless, or whether they are to be estimated rather in accordance with the mercy of God, so as at some time to be brought to an end." Dr. Pusey and the Benedictine editor try to put another meaning on it, though *what* meaning is far from clear. It certainly means that there will be a terminable future retribution, and therefore it supports all that I maintained: but I believe further, that it implies, at least, a doubt whether *all* retribution may not be ultimately terminable. Let readers judge for themselves, and in judging let them bear in mind the fact, that in two places St. Gregory came to the belief that when Christ descended into hell He liberated thence the souls of all the dead.[2]

γ. But if they decide, as almost all theologians have done, that St. Gregory here leans to Origenism, it does not follow (as Dr. Pusey asserts) that he was either inconsistent,[3] or that in his popular addresses he used language which he did not believe. Experience may have taught many of us to understand thoroughly his state of mind. There is no inconsistency in using the

[1] *Orat.* xl. p. 720, Ben.

[2] *Hom.* xlii. 59, and more distinctly in *Carm.* xii., which I have quoted, *supra*, p. 77. For the catena of opinions on this subject, *see supra*, pp. 76-79.

[3] There is more apparent inconsistency in such expressions as μηδὲ ὑπὲρ νύκτα ταύτην ἐστί τις κάθαρσις, *Orat.* 32 *in Pasch.* and in *Orat.* 15, ἡνίκα κολάσεως καιρὸς οὐ καθάρσεως: but there he is, I suppose, alluding to the doom beyond the judgment day.

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terms which are usually understood to imply a certain doctrine, in a sense less rigid than that in which they are usually interpreted. There is no inconsistency in cherishing, or in sometimes leaning to, a hope which goes beyond anything which we venture formally to teach. There is no hypocrisy, but very much the reverse, in declaring our belief in the possibility that God may show a larger mercy than we are able to announce as a distinctly revealed truth. And this is exactly what this great Father did. In not saying more he may have been influenced by that principle of "oeconomy" which other Fathers distinctly avow[1]; or he may have been diffident as to his own judgment; or he may have shrunk from stirring up fresh controversies. Be that as it may, the fact remains that he indicated his opinion that the universal hope of Origen, so far from being a heresy, pointed possibly to a blessed truth.

δ. And if so, surely the force of this fact has been overlooked and underrated! For St. Gregory of Nazianzus was no ordinary man. He was no mere Arnobius or Lactantius. Poet, orator, theologian; a man as great theologically as he was personally winning[2]; saluted by pre-eminence with the title of "The Theologian"; the sole "man whom the Church has suffered to share that title with the Evangelist St. John"[3]; in his day the acknowledged and leading champion of the orthodox faith as to the Trinity, and the Divine Humanity of Christ; the reviver of the dead and heretical Church in Constantinople; summoned by the unanimous voice of the orthodox to the patriarchate;

[1] Perhaps Neander goes too far in saying (*Ch. Hist.* iv. 213, 2, English translation), "that the Orientals, according to their theory of 'oeconomy,' allowed themselves many liberties, not to be reconciled with the strict laws of veracity"; but still there is some element of truth in his remark.

[2] Newman, *Hist. Ess.* ii. 81.

[3] Γρηγορίου δὲ τοῦτό φασιν ὥσπερ ἴδιον τὴν θεολογίαν. . . . Θεολόγον αὐτὸν ἐξαιρέτως προειπούσης μόνον τῆς τῶν πιστῶν Ἐκκλησίας, μετὰ τὸν υἱὸν τῆς βροντῆς τὸν πρῶτον θεολόγον.—PHILOTH. *Encom.* (apud Cave, *l. c.* ii. 336).

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president of that Second Oecumenical Council to which is due the acceptance of the present form of the Nicene Creed, and at which were present more saints and confessors than have ever met in any council; the most learned and the most eloquent bishop in one of the most learned ages of the Church[1]; whom St. Basil called a vessel of election, a deep well, a mouth of Christ[2]; whom Rufinus calls "incomparable in life and doctrine"[3]:—such was St. Gregory Nazianzen by position. And his character was worthy of his position; worthy of one who was the life-long friend of St. Basil; whose life had been twice preserved almost by miracle; who had lived so many years as a solitary and as an ascetic; who even when he sate on the throne of the great and wealthy Metropolitan See, preserved his mean dress and humble demeanour, and divided his rich revenues among the poor:—a man so eminent and so good, and so looked up to by the very leaders of his generation, that it was the pride of St. Jerome's life to have sat in youth at his feet.[4] This certainly is not the man whose opinion on such a subject can be casually set aside as a mere careless aberration into an indisputable heresy. Virtuous as he was from his earliest youth—never yielding obedience to any law but the supreme law of duty, a man too pure for a turbulent and ambitious city, a man to whose tender and poetic soul the least scruple becomes a remorse, a man of unblemished purity and boundless charity, whose mistakes rose only from the simplicity which hoped that others were as simple-hearted as himself,—one could not say of him, as modern theologians, with such true theological meekness, delight to say of those who love mercy,—that he was bribed to get rid of the doctrine of endless torments by his

[1] Tillemont. [2] Basil, *Ep.* cxli.

[3] Rufinus, *Prolog. in Opp. Naz.*

[4] "A happiness wherein he glories at every turn."—CAVE, *Prim. Fathers*, ii. 295 (JER. *Ep. ad Nepot.*, *Catal. in Greg. Naz.* &c.).

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personal dread of it! For Gregory of Nazianzus deserved the honour of sainthood if any man has ever done, being, as he was, one of the bravest men in an age of confessors, one of the holiest men in an age of saints. His opinion may have been mistaken, or his hope may be untenable as a doctrine; but certainly if it was this hope taken alone, which "the Church" condemned so severely as some would have us believe in the case of Origen, the very same hope passed wholly uncensured in the great Patriarch of Constantinople. Appealing, uncontradicted even by his worst enemies, to the firmness of his faith and the purity of his doctrines, and preserving even to hoar hairs the charm, candour, and the inexperience of boyhood, he withdrew without a pang from the cabals of Constantinople to the shadow of his ancestral trees near the quiet town of Nazianzus, and died as purely as he had lived. And Gregory is a canonised Saint of the Church of God, while amid the sounds of many anathemas the great and noble Origen, a man far more learned and no less holy, is all but assigned by name to everlasting damnation! Such is earthly justice, and such is ecclesiastical charity! "*Ille crucem sceleris pretium tulit hic diadema.*"[1]

7. And the case is even stronger with ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA. In the first place the fact that his opinions are expressed quite indisputably, throws no small light on the less decisive though hardly mistakable expressions of St. Clemens and St. Gregory of Nazianzus. For the hypothesis of interpolation suggested in his *Anotheuton* by Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, in the eighth century, is, as Petavius admits, quite vain, and has been abandoned as hopeless by every honest scholar. It belongs, as Neander[2] says, to "the worst

[1] Ample materials for the life of St. Gregory Nazianzen are preserved in his own poems and orations, and the reader will find a beautiful sketch of him in the fifth and sixth volumes of M. de Broglie's *L'Église et l'Empire Romain.*

[2] *Ch. Hist.* iv. 451.

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examples of an arbitrary caprice, regardless of honesty," and all the more so because he maintains the doctrine of Origen "with the greatest logical ability and acuteness in works written expressly for that purpose."[1]

He uses, of course, in general allusions such terms as "quenchless fire" and "endlessness," and when Dr. Pusey argues that in his "clear and explicit teaching" he shows that he must have believed in an endless hell, and therefore that he cannot have hinted at Universalism, or that if he did he was not an honest man, I must beg entirely to differ from him. The passages which Dr. Pusey quotes are by no means "clear and explicit" for the meaning which he gives to them; the passages which I shall quote *are* "clear and explicit" for a hope even larger than I am able to accept. Dr. Pusey minimises them as being mere "mists of Origenism which floated over his own imaginative mind, or that of his sister St. Macrina, to whom he owed so much."[2] But there is nothing misty about them; they are singularly lucid; they belong to whole trains of reasoning; they form part of a distinct system; and they contradict, not what he himself says, but what Dr. Pusey interprets him as saying. I agree most heartily with Dr. Pusey that to believe one thing and teach another is not honest; but he is by far too profound a patristic scholar not to be aware of passages in which the Fathers avowedly dwelt on severe doctrines because they considered them "useful," and avowedly abstained from dwelling on their real opinions respecting doctrines because they thought them "dangerous." Nor again did I say that St. Gregory meant only to give hints φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν: what I said was, that passages in his writings, and those of other Fathers, *are* φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν, *i.e.* that their meaning is clear to those who have the right

[1] He instances the comment on 1 Cor. xv. 28 (*Lib. Catech.* 8 and 35), the *De Anima*, and the tract on the early death of children.

[2] *What is of Faith*, p. 215.

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clue to their interpretation, even when they might be misinterpreted by others.

But the views of St. Gregory of Nyssa are not merely to be inferred. Any one who will study the following passages will see that they are stated with the most unflinching precision.

a. Thus in the Catechetical Oration, speaking of the Incarnation, he says that thereby our Lord was "benefiting not only him who was lost by means of these things (*i.e.* man), but even him who wrought this destruction against us (*i.e.* the devil)"; and he adds that "when death approaches to life, and darkness to light, and the corruptible to the incorruptible, the inferior is done away with, and reduced to non-existence, and the thing purged is benefited, just as the dross is purged from gold by fire." And he then continues in these remarkable words—

"In the same way in the long circuits of time, when the evil of nature which is now mingled and implanted in them has been taken away, whensoever the restoration to their old condition of the things which now lie in wickedness takes place, there will be a unanimous thanksgiving from the whole creation, both of those who have been punished in the purification, and of those who have not at all needed purification."[1]

And as though to remove all possible doubt as to his meaning, he speaks farther on of the Incarnation as—"Both liberating man from his wickedness, and healing the very inventor of wickedness (*i.e.* the devil)."[2]

[1] *Orat. Catechet.* 26. κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ταῖς μακραῖς περιόδοις ἐξαιρεθέντος τοῦ κακοῦ τῆς φύσεως τοῦ νῦν αὐτοῖς καταμιχθέντος καὶ συμφυέντος, ἐπειδὰν ἡ εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἀποκατάστασις τῶν νῦν ἐν κακίᾳ κειμένων γένηται, ὁμόφωνος εὐχαριστία παρὰ πάσης ἔσται τῆς κτίσεως καὶ -ὧν ἐν τῇ καθάρσει κεκολασμένων καὶ τῶν μηδὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐπιδεηθέντων καθάρσεως.

[2] τόν τε ἄνθρωπον τῆς κακίας ἐλευθερῶν καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν τῆς κακίας εὑρετὴν ἰώμενος.—*Id. ib.*

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β. And again, in the same book, nine chapters further on, he says that men who have died unbaptised and impenitent may be saved by fire—reverting to the metaphor of purged gold. "Since then there is a cleansing power in fire and in water, they who washed away from themselves the filth of wickedness by means of the mystic water, need not the other kind of things that cleanse. But they who have been uninitiated into this purification are necessarily purified by the fire." [1]

γ. He expresses the same views in his book on the soul and the resurrection. The history of this book is interesting. The great Basil, the Metropolitan of Caesarea, was dead, and all Asia was plunged in mourning. Even Jews and Pagans bewailed his death. What then must have been the feelings of his younger brother, St. Gregory of Nyssa, as he carried the news to their sainted sister, Macrina, to whom both he and Basil, humanly speaking, owed their souls? She was living in deep retirement at the head of a community of virgins, and, as he told her the sad event, the young Bishop was overwhelmed with a grief which it seemed as if even the consolations of religion could hardly dispel. The sister sustained the fainting soul of the brother. She poured forth such lofty and holy thoughts on the future destiny of man, that St. Gregory thought it his duty to record and perpetuate them.[2] He did so in this treatise, and it stands in the front rank among his extant works.

This then is the sentiment which he attributes to St. Macrina. Referring to St. Paul's prophecy (1 Cor. xv. 28) of the day when God would be "all things in all" (*πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν*), she says that in this passage "The Word seems to her to lay down the doctrine of the perfect obliteration of wickedness, for if God

[1] *Id.* c. 35, *ad fin.*

[2] St. Greg. Naz. *Or.* xliii. 86.

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shall be in all things that are, obviously wickedness shall not be in them."[1]

δ. And in the same book, speaking on Phil. ii., the saint says that St. Paul means that angels, men, and demons will all bow the knee in the name of Jesus, "Signifying this in that passage, that when evil has been obliterated in the long circuits of the aeons, nothing shall be left outside the limits of good, but even from them shall be unanimously uttered the confession of the Lordship of Christ."[2]

ε. Again, in the oration about the dead, he says that patriarchs, apostles, and men who preferred a virtuous to a sensual and material enjoyment are purged here on earth, but that the rest fling off their propensity to that which is earthly in the cleansing fire.[3]

Thus then this eminently great and orthodox Father deliberately argued that God, the Fountain of Good, created rational beings to be receptacles (*ἀγγεῖα*) of good; that evil is the disturbance of harmony between the soul and its destination, which is to receive godlike life; that "reward" and "punishment" are inadequate terms arising out of the disturbance of this harmony; that all punishments are means of purification ordained by Divine Love to restore fallen man; that God would not have permitted the existence of evil unless He had foreseen that, in the end, all rational beings would attain to blessed fellowship with Himself. I am far from arguing that these views are irrefragable; I only say that they were undoubtedly held by St. Gregory of Nyssa.[4]

[1] *ἐν τούτῳ δέ μοι δοκεῖ τὸν παντελῆ τῆς κακίας ἀφανισμὸν δογματίζειν ὁ λόγος, εἰ γὰρ ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς οὖσιν ὁ Θεὸς ἔσται ἡ κακία δηλάδη οὐκ ἔσται ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν.—De Anim. et Resurrect. Opp.* i. 852, ed. Paris.

[2] *Id. ib.*

[3] *τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν διὰ τῆς εἰς ὕστερον ἀγωγῆς ἐν τῷ καθαρσίῳ πυρὶ ἀποβαλόντων τὴν πρὸς τὴν ὕλην προσπάθειαν.—De Mortuis Orat.* p. 635. See *supra*, pp. 41, 42.

[4] It would be superfluous to quote further passages, equally strong or stronger, but the reader may consult the works of St. Gregory (ed.

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Germanus might well admit that these passages could have but one meaning; and Petavius may well ask "Potuitne quidquam apertius ex Origenis opinione illâ disputari?"[1] It would indeed require an elaborate and not very honest ingenuity to explain these passages away. It will be needless to refer to passages in his tract "On the Early Death of Children," or in his other various works and sermons. Those here quoted are sufficiently decisive.

And as Dr. Plumptre has pointed out, it is most significant that St. Gregory enumerates these opinions without the least apparent consciousness that he is thus "deviating into the byepaths of new and strange opinions." I imagine that such a charge would have greatly surprised him. "He claims to be taking his stand on the doctrines of the Church in thus teaching, with as much confidence as when he is expounding the mysteries of the Divine nature as set forth in the creed of Nicaea."[2]

What then becomes, let me ask once more, of the somewhat unworthy insinuation, repeated by one after another of the writers on this question, that Christians who embrace the larger hope must necessarily be unorthodox as to the divinity of Christ? Dr. Cazenove tells us—and he is rapturously quoted by a host of followers eager to seize any weapon against a dogma which they repudiate—that he has "not been able to discover a single impugner of the dogma of eternal punishment who is consistent in his denial, and at the same time orthodox." So then it seems that the orthodoxy of St. Gregory of Nazianzus and

Paris, 1615), i. 99, 100, 844, 853 (*v. et Tunc ipse Filius, &c., ad fin.*); ii. 493, 533, 654, 661, 691, 1,067, in all of which passages the whole train of reasoning, and not merely a few isolated words, point in this direction. See too Dallaeus, *De Poenis et Satisfactionibus*, 372-377; Huet's *Origeniana*, lib. ii. qu. ix. *De Proemiis et Poenis;* Sixtus Senensis, *l.c.*; Neander, iv. 456, &c.

[1] *De Angelis*, iii. 7, § 4.

[2] *Dict. of Christian Biog.* s. v. Eschatology.

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St. Gregory of Nyssa was saved solely because they were "inconsistent"! That they contradict themselves I deny; and it will take stronger hands than those of the writers who praise Dr. Cazenove's remark to brand with heresy respecting the Trinity and the Incarnation the names of the two great Fathers —the greatest of their day—the one called pre-eminently "the Theologian," the other "the Father of Fathers"—the brother of Basil, the heir of his thoughts and of his fame—whose writings were appealed to for centuries afterwards as the chief bulwark of the Nicene faith.

Let honest men, let those who prefer truth to ingenuity, judge this question afresh in the light of the facts which I have now proved. To confine myself at present to three names only:—ST. MACRINA, Saint and Virgin, to whom the Church owes no little of the career of her great brothers; ST. GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS, the Patriarch, and the President of the Second Oecumenical Council; ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA, the Confessor for the Faith, to whose authority was mainly due the introduction of the new clauses into the Nicene Creed,[1] and to whose writings the Council of Ephesus appealed as containing the strongest arguments against Arian heresy,[2] expressed, quite openly, a doctrine or a hope on the subject of the final restoration of mankind which is not distinguishable from that of Origen. For expressing this hope, or this doctrine, they were never abused, never attacked, never censured, never so much as challenged. They lived, and they died, and they have continued in the odour of sanctity. They are recognised as Saints and Fathers to this day. The Church history

[1] *Nicephorus*, xii. 13, *ad fin.*, says that he wrote them; but this seems to be a mistake, for they are found before his time. See Swainson, *Nicene and Apostles' Creed*, pp. 94 *seq.*; Hort, *Two Dissertations*, p. 107; Stanley, *Christian Institutions*, p. 331.

[2] Tillemont, *Mem. Eccl.* ix. 601.

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of their century is filled with their names and their eulogies. We are inheritors of the faith of which they were the most conspicuous champions. No men did more for the recognition by the Church of the Divinity and Personality of the Holy Spirit. And yet we are asked to believe that Origen was condemned and anathematised because more than a century earlier he expressed the very same opinion which they openly repeated without so much as a whisper of disapproval on the part of their contemporaries!

Credat Judaeus—non ego! The opinion for which even Origen was condemned (except by individual writers), was *not* his hope for the ultimate restoration of mankind, but only for a far wider and far more questionable scheme, in which this hope was but an accidental element.

And, to my mind, these facts entirely destroy all semblance of credibility for the opinion that the Church, speaking authoritatively, ever was either decisive or unanimous in its condemnation of that single point of Origen's opinion which may be described as "the larger hope." The express words of these Fathers outweigh scores of vague repeated traditional expressions of other Fathers—of whom the majority had not a tittle of their learning or their weight, and whose expressions, for the most part, neither decide nor were meant to decide anything whatever as to the point at issue. Compared with the Cappadocian theologians many of those to whom Dr. Pusey refers were but "off-hand dogmatists."[1]

8. Nor amid the purely general, and often quite irrelevant utterances—the mere repetition of Scripture metaphors—to be found in comparatively unimportant writers like St. Andrew of Caesarea and St. Macarius of Egypt (both of whom speak

[1] αὐτοσχέδιοι δογμάτισται.—GREG. NYSS.

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of milder and severer punishments), St. Serapion, Paphnutius, Serenus, Moyses, &c.—can I at all assent to the sweeping aside the evidence of such truly great men and profound thinkers as DIODORUS OF TARSUS and THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA, as though it were of no importance.[1] That evidence may be seen in Assemanni, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* (iii. 323-324), as preserved by Salomo, Metropolitan of Bassora, A.D. 1222. Theodore of Mopsuestia argued for the restoration of the wicked from Matt. v. 26, inferring that the time might come when the debt might be paid to the uttermost farthing, and from Luke xii. 47, 48, inferring that "few stripes" must mean terminable stripes. Diodorus argued from the nature of punishment; from the belief that God's mercy to the evil would inflict less than their deserts, as His mercy to the good gave them more than theirs; and from the difficulty of supposing that immortality would be prolonged solely for the sake of inflicting torments.[2] Dr. Pusey calls these arguments "commonplace." They do not seem to me one-tenth part so commonplace as the counter-arguments of St. Augustine and others; and certainly neither Diodorus nor Theodore were commonplace men. *οὐκ εἰκὸς τὸν σοφὸν ἄνδρα λῆρεῖν.* "Wise men," says Plato, "do not usually talk nonsense." That the two writers "use different arguments and have different theories," seems to me to tell *for*, rather than against, their views. It shows that the question was unsettled; that the truth struck them from different points of view; that they did not idly repeat each other; and that there are manifold regions of thought from which arguments in support of God's mercy may be drawn.

[1] There is little direct evidence as to the opinions on this subject of Theodoret and Didymus of Alexandria, but there is reason to believe that they adopted the view of Origen.

[2] These views were shared by many eminent Nestorian Bishops. Assemanni, *Bibl. Orient.* iii. 323, iv. 204.

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I called them "great teachers," "on the authority," says Dr. Pusey, "of Gieseler." I certainly referred to Gieseler, but I do not know why I needed his authority in particular. I might, for the matter of that, have referred, for high encomiums, on one or both of them, to St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, St. Epiphanius, Facundus of Hermiane, and St. Jerome. I might have applied the same epithet to them on the authority of Neander,[1] who calls them "venerated teachers of the Syrian Church"; and Diodorus "distinguished"; and Theodore "sagacious and original"; and of Dr. Hort, who speaks of Diodorus as "probably the greatest theologian, Gregory of Nyssa excepted, who took part in the Council of Constantinople"; or even of Mosheim,[2] who calls Theodore "a remarkable and eminent man, and one of the most learned of his time."

Or again, if I wanted such surety for my words, I might have called them great teachers on the authority of Dorner, who says: "Theodore of Mopsuestia was the crown and climax of the school of Antioch. The compass of his learning, his acuteness, and we must suppose also the force of his personal character, conjoined with his labours through many years as a teacher both of churches and of young and able disciples, and as a prolific writer, gained for him the title of 'The Master of the East.' He laboured on uninterruptedly to his death in A.D. 427, and was regarded with an appreciation the more widely extended, as he was the first Oriental theologian of his time."[3] But surely it is somewhat late in the day to be taken to task for giving the name of "great teachers" to two of the most illustrious founders of the best and most fruitful method of sacred exegesis —that method which was the special glory of the

[1] Neander, *Ch. Hist.* iv. 10, 285, &c.
[2] Mosheim, *Cent.* v. pt. ii. c. i. 3; Hort, *Two Dissert.* 125.
[3] Dorner, *Person of Christ*, i. 50.

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school of Antioch! Nor is it a very worthy method—though it has always been and still is very common—to depreciate the knowledge and greatness of teachers simply because they hold some opinions which may happen to differ from our own. I confess that this cavalier way of cheapening great names is somewhat painful to me. It was not always so that these two holy and learned bishops were spoken of; it was not till their names were mixed up with the imbroglio of schemes fostered and agitated by the turbulent and haughty Cyril. The Syrian Church looked up to them as fathers and teachers. The good Bishop Meletius wrote of "the apostolic faith which we have received from the great Theodore."[1] And in an edict of the orthodox Theodosius, after the second great Oecumenical Council, he said that the Catholic bishops would be recognised by being those who, in the East, were in communion with Diodorus of Tarsus.[2]

Diodorus, Bishop of Tarsus, friend and correspondent of St. Basil, master of St. Chrysostom, who pronounced his eulogy, was one of the most eminent teachers of his age. He spent the greater part of his life in combating the heathens, Jews, and heretics of all denominations. He was a vigorous defender of the Nicene Creed, and the loss of his works is due to the Arians. He introduced responses into the services of the Church. He ended in universal honour a blameless and fruitful life, after having, as Theodoret said,[3] saved the bark of the Church

[1] *Ep.* 152.

[2] *Cod. Theod.* xvi. t. i. l. (*De Broglie*, v. 453.) "My argument was this. If I, who knew my own innocence, was so blackened by party prejudice, perhaps those high rulers and those servants of the Church in the many ages which intervened between the early Nicene times and the present, who were laden with such grievous accusations, were innocent also, and the reflexion seemed to make me tender towards those great names of the past to whom weaknesses or crimes were imputed."—NEWMAN, *Apologia*, p. 18.

[3] Theodoret, *H. E.* v. 4.

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from being submerged under the waves of misbelief.[1]

Theodorus of Mopsuestia did more than any man who ever lived to rescue the Church from that abuse of the allegorising system of Origen, which would, sooner or later, have been absolutely fatal to all sound exegesis, and would have made the Bible an unintelligible sphinx, of which the utterances were twisted hither and thither at each man's will. He was perhaps the greatest of all the exegetes of his time, and he died in undisturbed communion with the Catholic Church, of which he had been a bishop for thirty-six years.[2] He died in A.D. 429. It was not till A.D. 553 that the by no means universally accepted edict of the Fifth Council condemned him as a heretic.

Yet Theodore of Mopsuestia is now put aside as "the impious," "who was condemned for a whole miscellany of heresies by the Fifth General Council"[3]; and we are told by Dr. Pusey that the two were "patriarchs of those who denied the Incarnation." Is it not somewhat strange that a man who is thus recklessly asserted to have "denied the Incarnation" is said to have converted from Arianism a large part of the population of his diocese?

May we not quote once more the complaint of Facundus and of Domitian of Ancyra, that, under pretence of condemning the dogmas of Origen, many are rushing into the condemnation of most holy and most glorious teachers, and indeed of all the saints who had lived before or after him?[4] Even Cyril—the bitter and unscrupulous Cyril—who (like Evagrius)[5] did not hesitate to condemn to hell the unhappy Nestorius whom he had goaded to misery and

[1] See Chrysostom, *Laus Diodori.* Facundus Hermian. *Defens. Trium Capit.* iv. 2. Socrates, *H. E.* vi. 13. Sozomen, *H. E.* vii. 2.
[2] See Photius, *Cod.* 81. [3] Oxenham, *Cath. Esch.* p. 115.
[4] Facundus Hermian. iv. 4, p. 62. [5] Evagr. *H. E.* i. 7.

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ruin, yet said of Theodore that "he had gone to God."[1]

Of the "Fifth General Council" I shall have something to say hereafter, and I shall show the grounds on which alike the genuineness and the validity of some of its asserted decisions may well be questioned. Nor do I consider it in the least degree fair to say that Theodore and Diodorus questioned the Incarnation,[2] a charge due either to the ignorant malice or misunderstanding of their enemies. Meanwhile I claim the authority of these two great Bishops, to whom in their lifetime, and long afterwards, the Church looked up with the profoundest veneration, as showing that in their day, at any rate, the doctrine even of Universalism had never been authoritatively condemned; and that, up to this time, and far on in the fifth century, there existed none of that unbroken unanimity on the subject which is now asserted. Mr. Swete, in his valuable edition of parts of his *Commentaries*, says that "every accession to our knowledge of him adds strength to the conviction that he was entirely unconscious of deviating from the doctrine of the Catholic Church."[3]

9. And as for the condemnation of these two Fathers, even supposing it to have been honourably obtained, even supposing that their Nestorianism was

[1] ἐπεὶ δὲ ἀπεδήμησε πρὸς Θεὸν, Cyril, *Opp.* p. 200. Cyril himself is condemned to a place of punishment by Theodoret in his letter (not improbably genuine) to the Patriarch of Antioch, on Cyril's death; but Theodoret seems to have believed in the efficacy of prayers even for the wicked, for he adds, "May it be so ordered by your *prayers that he may obtain mercy and forgiveness, and that the unmeasured grace of God may prevail over his wickedness.*" Canon Luckock in his *After Death* has not noticed this passage.

[2] See Harduin, iii. 107.

[3] "His eschatology is meant to be a safeguard against Apollinarianism; his sympathy with Pelagius arises from a dread of fatalism; his rejection of much of the prophetic and typical import of the Holy Scriptures is due to an excessive jealousy for their literal truths. Of all that the Church declared to be of the faith, he was the staunch defender."—SWETE, *Theod. Mopsuestia*, Introduction.

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not capable of explanation, or modification, or retractation, had they been heard in their own favour, and not charged with it long after they had been laid in honoured graves, yet may we not say with the learned and pious Cave, that "Nothing can be more true and modest than what St. Hierom observed in such cases,[1] that it's great rashness and irreverence presently to charge the ancients with heresie for a few obnoxious expressions, since it may be they erred with a simple and honest mind, or wrote them in another sense . . . or they took less heed and care to deliver their minds with the utmost accuracy and exactness, while as yet men of perverse minds had not sown their tares nor disturbed the Church with the clamour of their disputation, nor infected men's minds with their poisonous and corrupt opinions."[2] I have no sympathy with the views of Nestorius; I accept *ex animo* the word "indivisibly" (ἀδιαιρέτως) by which the Council of Ephesus condemned his error; but the less said about Cyril and the conduct of the Council of Ephesus the better; and it must not be forgotten that "Nestorius's offers of accommodation were refused, his explanation not read, his submission rejected, and he himself condemned unheard."[3] Luther was not the first, nor will he be the last, to think that the differences between "Nestorius personally and the Council which condemned him were mainly verbal," and that "the blame of the controversy is to be charged upon the turbulent spirit of Cyril and his personal aversion to the Patriarch of Constantinople."[4]

10. Passing on to DIDYMUS OF ALEXANDRIA († A.D. 396), not one of the passages which Dr. Pusey quotes contains anything more decisive than the current Scriptural terms which all alike used,

[1] Jer. *adv. Rufin.* ii. p. 219.
[2] *Life of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, ad fin.* (Apost. Fathers), i. p. 281.
[3] See Assemanni, *Bibl. Orient.* iii. p. 210.
[4] Mosheim, *Cent.* v. ii. c. 5.

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whether they were Origenists or not. I content myself with the perfectly unbiased opinions of Neander and Gieseler,[1] of whom the former says that Didymus formed himself on the writings of Origen, and defended his authority, and had adopted his whole system, except in matters which were supposed to touch on questions of our Lord's nature; and Gieseler that he "was known as an Origenist."[2] St. Jerome, ardently as he admired this all-accomplished blind scholar, does not conceal this fact.[3] I add further, as against the asserted unanimity of the Church on this subject, the weighty remark of Gieseler, that "the belief in the inalienable capability of improvement in all rational beings, and the limited duration of future punishment, was so general even in the West and among the opponents of Origen, that, whatever may be said of its not having risen without the influence of Origen's school, it had become entirely independent of his system." St. Jerome not only shows in his own writings how wide on these subjects was the permitted variety of opinions,[4] but he expressly reckons the "*repromissiones futurorum quomodo debeant accipi*" among things that were still unsettled.[5]

11. It would be useless to proceed with the Greek Fathers. While not denying that some of them believed in "endless retribution," I think that I have proved, as clearly as anything can be proved, that their suppposed unanimity in this view is a mere fiction, and that those who openly dissented from it—going therein farther than I have done—were some of the ablest and best and most learned

[1] Neander, iv. 455, 459; Gieseler, i. 361, English translation.

[2] Gieseler refers to Lücke, *Quaest. Didymianae*, p. 9. On the services of this great scholar, see Guerike, *De Schol. Alexandr.* pp. 69-80.

[3] Jer. *adv. Rufin*, ii. p. 409; iii. p. 463 (*Opp.* iv).

[4] Jer. on Gal. v. 22, "Nullam rationabilium creaturarum perire perpetuo," and on Eph. iv. 16, and Ambrosiaster on Eph. iii. 10.

[5] Proaem in lib. xviii. in Isaiam.

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among them. I will only add one word respecting St. Athanasius and St. Chrysostom.

12. Considering the extent of the writings of ST. ATHANASIUS and the fact that Origen's opinions on universal restoration were so universally known and so widely adopted, I think that his all but total silence on the subject is an additional proof that in his day that particular opinion was not viewed so unfavourably as has been asserted. If the opinion were so dangerous and so untenable as its impugners assert, how is it that St. Athanasius has so little, and that so purely general, to say on the other side? The passages which Dr. Pusey quotes are not in the smallest degree decisive. They only refer to vague Scriptural expressions, and are quite consistent with a belief in some form of ultimate deliverance for all, at any rate except the very worst. I said that "he only speaks with oblique and kindly disapproval of Origen's opinion on the restitution." This Dr. Pusey flatly contradicts: the reader shall judge. So far from treating Origen as an abominable heretic, I believe that he only thrice alludes to him in all his writings. In two of these passages he gives him a complimentary epithet, calling him in one "the indefatigable," in the other "the marvellous and indefatigable."[1] In one he expressly defends Origen from the attempts of Arians to claim him on their side, and quotes him to prove that the Son is co-eternal and co-essential with the Father. In a third passage he alludes, as Cave says, "obliquely"—in a few kindly passing words—to his view of restoration.[2] That view he rejects, but not in the tone of one who viewed it with indignation, and not as one who wished to brand it as a heresy. The more I look into the

[1] *Def. Nic.* vi. § 27.

[2] *De Communi Essent. Patris et Fil. et Sp. Sancti*, § 49. The same passage occurs in *Quaest. ad Antioch.* lxxii. Stephen Gobar, who knew the works of St. Athanasius well, says that in several places he had spoken favourably of Origen, and that he constantly studied his works.

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history and writings of those times the more firmly am I convinced that Neander is right in saying that the doctrine of final restitution, taken alone, never was regarded as heretical, or as untenable within the limits of the faith, until the furious attacks on Origen two centuries after his death led men to mix up this opinion,—which I still believe and maintain was never condemned by any general council,—with others of his opinions which were so condemned. Such is the opinion of Neander. And in spite of the asserted unanimity of the Church on the subject I have shown (1) that the views of Origen were held by large multitudes both in the East and in the West; (2) that they were defended by Church Fathers of the most splendid reputation without any injury to their canonisation or their character for orthodoxy; (3) that they found champions in some of the deepest thinkers and ablest writers of the three greatest theological schools—the school of Alexandria, the school of Antioch, and the school of Cappadocia.

13. To ST. CHRYSOSTOM and his opinions on this subject Dr. Pusey devotes nearly seventeen pages.[1] It was needless to do so, for every one would admit that St. Chrysostom again and again uses the ordinary language about future punishment. He preached in the corrupt, wicked cities of Antioch and Constantinople, and came into contact with many who, from idle motives and amid frivolous lives, with no earnestness of opinion and no depth of conviction, adopted some of the widespread views that no Christian would be doomed to hell, or that hell is nothing but a threat of temporary punishment. Both these views St. Chrysostom rejected, as most Christians do, and as I myself do; and rejecting them it was right that he should most earnestly and emphatically warn those who thus flattered themselves into a life of wickedness. No warnings could be too strong for such,

[1] *What is of Faith*, pp. 243-260.

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and I have been even censured for the way in which, in the very volume which is now under consideration, I tried to impress such warnings on all my hearers. Yet I greatly doubt whether St. Chrysostom, even in his strongest passages, means to brand as unorthodox even the Universalism of Origen, much less any hope less large. By far the majority of the passages quoted are as indecisive as the others on which I have commented; they might have been used equally well by Origen, or by St. Gregory of Nyssa. They are large metaphorical Scriptural expressions, with which the great orator is not professing to deal philosophically or critically. Now St. Chrysostom was a pupil of Diodorus of Tarsus, and must therefore have been familiar with that one opinion about final restoration which was accepted even by those who in other exegetical matters were the ablest opponents of Origen. Does St. Chrysostom ever say one word in disapproval of Diodorus? Does he ever distinctly formulate the arguments of the Universalists, and show why he considered them to be untenable? He constantly rebukes—and most justly—those who "deny hell"; but I find very little in him which excludes the possibility of a belief in a modified Origenism; and no single word that excludes any view which I have advocated. I therefore attach very great importance to the fact that in the Thirty-ninth Homily on the First Epistle to the Corinthians he mentions the view of those who believe in the final extinction of evil without a word of refutation and without a word of disapproval.

In considering this let it be remembered (1) not only (as I have said) that St. Chrysostom was the pupil and panegyrist of one who on this point was a distinct Origenist; (2) that though the charge of Origenism brought against him at the Synod of the Oak was absurd, yet it may have been grounded on some

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supposed leaning to this particular view of Origen's; (3) that he gave a cordial protection to the "tall brothers" and the Origenist monks; and (4) that he is the writer of one of the very few passages which sanction prayers for those who died in wilful sin. Speaking of those who lived all their lives at random, in luxury and wantonness, of whom it might even be said that "it were good for them not to have been born," he says: "Shall we not then wail for this man? Shall we not endeavour to snatch him out of his perils? For it is possible, if we will, that his punishment become light to him. If then we should offer on his behalf continual prayers, if we should give alms, even though he be unworthy, God will forgive our importunity."[1] In two other places[2] he speaks of doing what we can to procure some consolation (*παραμυθίαν*) for a dead sinner. Canon Luckock, who quotes these passages, can see nothing "in them to weaken the force of the writer's apparent conviction" —though introduced with qualifications and some doubt—"that a life of sin did not place the sinner wholly beyond the influence of our prayers."[3]

And besides all this, it must not be forgotten that when Epiphanius had been goaded by the intrigues of Theophilus of Alexandria to call a local synod for the condemnation of Origen, and to take the decrees of this synod with him to Constantinople, St. Chrysostom refused to subscribe them, and sent Epiphanius back to his see with what Bishop Rust calls a "gentle snubbing" for his pragmatical meddling—because he thought it "very hard and unequal, and not according to the manner of ecclesiastical

[1] *τοῦτον οὖν οὐ θρηνήσομεν; οὐ πειρασόμεθα τῶν κινδύνων ἐξαρπάσαι; ἐστί γαρ ἐστὶν ἐὰν θέλωμεν κούφην αὐτῷ γενέσθαι τὴν κόλασιν.—In Act. Ap. Hom.* xxi. 3.

[2] *In Joann. Hom.* lxi. 4; *in Ep.* I *ad Cor. Hom.* xli. 4.

[3] *After Death*, p. 140. He adds, and the remark illustrates much that I have said, "St. Chrysostom certainly lays himself open to a charge of inconsistency."

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censures, that a person of so great learning and piety, who had been so serviceable to the Church, who lived two hundred years before, whose books no council had condemned, should now be condemned by a small packed synod of his professed enemies."[1]

And here I must respectfully protest against Dr. Pusey's remark that I imputed to St. Chrysostom "accommodation, *i.e.* that he did not believe what he said." "Accommodation," in the sense in which the Fathers believed in its expediency, simply meant that they sometimes dwelt on doctrines which they thought useful,[2] and which were commonly accepted, without entering into any controversy about them; without definitely stating their own views; without entering into details; without saying all in public which they thought themselves at liberty to say in private; without feeling bound to distinguish between what they expressed in ordinary phrases and the hopes which they might privately entertain that some of those phrases were capable of a meaning less sweeping and less exclusive than they conveyed to ordinary hearers.[3] I do not support their views on this subject; but that such were their views is undeniable. St. Chrysostom himself constantly refers to the thought, "What is more *profitable* than the fear of hell?" and yet even in the very heat and passion of his rhetoric on the subject very little escapes him which can be regarded as a distinct and decisive repudiation of the views even of Origen, much less of those who believed in some form of temporary penal "fire."[4]

Let us take the case of an orator analogous in many respects to St. Chrysostom—Bishop Jeremy

[1] Bishop Rust, in *The Phœnix*, i. p. 10.

[2] See Windet, *De Statu Vitâ funct.* p. 189.

[3] Athanasius speaks of Dionysius as writing, κατ' οἰκονομίαν, "oeconomically," "or *with reference to certain persons addressed, or objects contemplated.*"—Newman, *Arians*, ii. 44, *n.*

[4] See note on "Accommodation," at end of chapter.

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Taylor. There are many variations of doctrine in his different works; but it would be very harsh to say of these that in some instances "he must have taught what he did not believe," or that "he could not have taught this if he were an honest man." We must take his opinions as we find them, consistent or not. Allowance must be made in the cases of such men for differences of mood, for rhetorical amplitude, for power of imagination, for inexactitude of language, for growth of opinions. Now from the writings of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, and above all from his Second Sermon on the Advent to Judgment, may be gathered some of the most frightful passages ever written in description of the horrors of hell; and yet it is clear that those agglomerations of horrible torments in which he revels can only be regarded as "bubbles, and flashes, and electrical apparitions from the magic caldron of a fervid and ebullient fancy, constantly fuelled by an unexampled opulence of language."[1] For—in a manner exactly analogous to that of St. Chrysostom—he alludes, without disapproval or refutation, to the apparent belief of St. Irenaeus and St. Justin Martyr in "conditional immortality"; and to the fact that the word everlasting only means "to the end of its proper period"; and to the argument that, "though the fire is everlasting, not all that enters into it is everlasting."[2] And there are sufficient grounds to sanction Coleridge's remark that, in spite of all his "Tartarean drench" of descriptions, he probably held to the view of the annihilation of the wicked, at least *in abditis fidei*.[3]

I will take two other instances to show that the use of current phrases does not necessarily show a man's unalterable opinion, and must not be taken

[1] Coleridge. [2] *Works*, viii. 43.

[3] See my sermon on Bishop Jeremy Taylor in *Masters of English Theology*, pp. 175-211.

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to explain away his obvious leanings to another view.

One is the case of the poet Dr. Edward Young, author of the *Night Thoughts*. No one has revelled more than he has done in descriptions of an endless hell, and yet in such lines as—

> "Ah, Mercy, Mercy, art thou dead above?
> Is Love extinguished in the Source of Love?"

as well as in many other passages of his poems, his leanings are obvious; and it is known that he greatly admired and heartily recommended the works and sentiments of men who had earnestly pleaded for a wider hope. (See his *Moral Letters*.)

The instance of Dr. Watts—"the flower of Non-conformist orthodoxy"—is still more remarkable. His hymns have had no small share in spreading and fixing the popular accretions to Christian faith; and I suppose that there are chapels where men and women still "praise God by singing"—

> "There is a dreadful hell,
> And everlasting pains,
> Where sinners must with devils dwell,
> In darkness, fire, and chains."

And yet it is certain that Dr. Watts did not hold, in its ordinary sense, the doctrine of "everlasting pains," but held both the possibility of repentance after death, and of the extinction of sentient existence. One passage has already been quoted on p. 30, and another, *infra*, p. 401. Here is yet another:—

"Whenever such a criminal in hell shall be found making such a sincere and mournful address to the righteous and merciful Judge of all, I cannot think that a God of perfect equity and rich mercy will continue such a creature under His vengeance, but rather that the perfection of God will contrive a way to escape, though God has not given us here any revelation or discovery of such special grace as this."

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Now no one will say that the pious writer was not a thoroughly honest man; and yet he clearly uses language which, literally taken, is not in accordance with the more thoughtful and deliberate expression of his opinions. Will any man of competent culture deny that his *real* opinion is to be deduced from the expression of his distinct thoughts when they seem to correct and abandon the popular phraseology?

If I do not follow Dr. Pusey farther through his catena, it is only because enough has been said. But the instances which I have examined are not the only ones in which I could show that the Fathers from whom he quotes used other language on the same subject, and that they were therefore either "inconsistent," or else that the terms which he quotes from them are capable of a different interpretation.

By way of a single specimen take ST. PETER CHRYSOLOGUS († A.D. 450). He says in one place (*Serm.* 60, *De Symbolo*) that "there is, after the resurrection, no end either of good or of ill." Yet in another (*Serm.* 123), speaking of the "great gulf," he says, "those who have been assigned to penal custody in hell cannot be transferred to the rest of the saints, *unless*, having been already redeemed by the grace of Christ, they be freed from this hopelessness by the intercession of the Holy Church. So that what the sentence denies them, the Church may obtain, and grace bestow." I do not see what meaning can be assigned to this passage, except that of the possibility that God may be pleased not to carry out to the full His own threatenings—the view, in fact, which is not unfrequently alluded to by the Fathers, but is usually associated in modern days with the honoured name of Archbishop Tillotson.

II. A much briefer examination of the opinions of the Latin Fathers will here suffice. Every one admits that Origenism in general, and Origen's hope for a final restoration of the wicked in particular, was much

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less prevalent in the West than in the East; and that after St. Augustine's day, amid ever-deepening corruptions of religious truth, this hope was to a considerable extent extinguished. It was extinguished, both because men accepted the authority of St. Augustine —weak as his arguments on this subject are, and wavering as is his language—and also because they assumed (as I believe erroneously) that *this* opinion of Origen had been condemned with his other opinions by some Conciliar decree. But this dissemination of the popular view would not have been either so rapid or so complete had it not been that the gradual distinctness acquired by the notion of "purgatory" rendered the notion of "hell" less immediately and overwhelmingly horrible to the imagination of Christian men.[1]

And yet many of my previous remarks about the abatements which must be made from the asserted evidence as to the opinions of the Greeks, apply with scarcely less force to the passages quoted from the Latins.[2] I shall, however, content myself with considering the opinions of three great Fathers—St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St. Jerome; and I shall be much surprised if every really candid reader does not admit that, though they all three reject Universalism (as I do myself), they neither held those current errors which I have repudiated, nor do they treat even Universalism as a recognised or dangerous heresy.

1. As regards ST. AMBROSE I will merely ask the reader to study with unbiased mind the following passages:—

a. "For the devil and his ministers will not be

[1] "The doctrine of Purgatory was brought home to the minds of the people as a portion or form of penance due to post-baptismal sin." —Newman, *Es. on Development*, p. 388.

[2] Even Tertullian, fierce as he usually is, says "that a moderate fault shall there [in the next world] be atoned for *by a delay of resurrection*."—*De Animâ*, 38.

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scourged. The punishment is separated, where the fault also is different. . . . If human decision works this result" [namely, the obtaining of pity, and the not hopeless exclusion from the possibility of repentance], "how much more must that of Christ be awaited by all? The judgment of the devil is delayed that he may be ever a criminal in punishment, ever bound in the chain of his wickedness, that he may undergo for ever the judgment of his own conscience. So then that Dives in the Gospel, although a sinner, is pressed with penal agonies that he may escape the sooner. But the devil is shown not as yet to have come to judgment," &c.[1]

The passage must be considered with its whole context. Petavius argues from it that it was the opinion of St. Ambrose that the punishment of the devil was put off because it was to be endless, but that the punishments of men were inflicted immediately after death, "because they ought to be moderated and limited by pity." Referring to this passage of St. Ambrose, I had said that, though in other passages he uses the ordinary language, he here distinctly states the doctrine of universal restitution. Dr. Pusey thinks it enough to reply that "he distinctly states the contrary."[2] Certainly St. Ambrose was speaking *only of men*, but so was I. I had declined to enter into the question about devils; and in repeating that, in this passage, St. Ambrose does distinctly imply the restitution of all men, I find that Petavius says the same thing. The reader at any rate has the materials wherewith to judge for himself.

Further, if the passage be not of an Universalist tendency as regards mankind, it is all the more in favour of my own views. For Dr. Pusey can only

[1] "Ideo Dives ille in Evangelio, licet peccator, poenalibus torquetur aerumnis, ut citius possit evadere."—ST. AMBR. in Ps. cxviii. *ad vs.* 1.
[2] *What is of Faith*, p. 109.

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set aside the Saint's evidence by saying, "It is nowhere laid down that Dives is in the place of the lost." Therefore, since St. Ambrose had no manner of doubt that Dives was not lost, Dr. Pusey must either concede to me the full weight of this Father's opinion, or must give up the tenability of the arguments about this parable and the "great gulf fixed" on which the popular notions about the lost are mainly built.

β. The other passage to which I referred was the well-known one in his remarks on Ps. xxxvi., where St. Ambrose says:—"Although we shall not be burned up, yet we shall be burned."

And again:—"I shall burn till the lead melts away. If no silver be found in me, alas! I shall be plunged down into the lowest pit, or consumed entire as the stubble."[1]

γ. And again, speaking of 1 Cor. iii. 15, he says:—"Whence it is gathered that the man is saved in part, condemned in part."

These three latter passages do not indeed convey the doctrine or hope of a final restoration of all, but, as Dr. Pusey says, they "contrast the temporal suffering in the Day of Judgment with the eternal." They therefore express the belief, which popular opinion ignores or denies, that many may have to pass through punishment hereafter, and yet may be saved. But that was the very opinion which I have maintained in my *Eternal Hope*, and which I am maintaining now.

δ. There is a still more remarkable statement in the Saint's comment on Psalm i. "Those," he says, "who do not come to the first, but are reserved for the second resurrection, shall be burned until they fill up the times between the first and second resurrection, or, should they not have done so, *will remain longer in punishment*."

[1] St. Amb. in Ps. cxviii. Serm. XX.

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e. And I am justified in saying that the whole tone and bent of the mind of St. Ambrose were on the side of trust in God's mercy and pity. Thus he denies altogether, in one passage, any pain of sense.[1] In the treatise on the Blessing of Death he again and again expresses the thought that even to sinners death is a boon, not a curse; because the punishment beyond the grave is less to be dreaded than the state of sin in this life. Two quotations will suffice:—

"For," he says, if the guilty die "who have been unwilling to leave the path of sin, even against their will they still gain, not of nature but of fault, that they may sin no more." The argument of the whole passage is that "even for sinners death is better than life."

ζ. And again he says (c. 7) that "Death is not bitter, but to the sinner it is bitter; and yet life is more bitter than death; for it is a deadlier thing to live in sin than to die in sin; because the sinner as long as he lives increases his sin; if he dies he ceases to sin."

η. Once more let the reader study the book of St. Ambrose on Penitence, and he will be able to judge whether this saint would have sympathised most with what I have said or with the crude horrors of the popular Calvinism.[2] On that side would have been Novatian the schismatic and Pelagius the heresiarch; on my side some of the very best, greatest, and most orthodox of the Fathers.

2. ST. JEROME'S language varies greatly. He is not a consistent writer. But the following passages prove this much at any rate—(1) that even in his

[1] "Ergo neque corporalium stridor aliquis dentium, neque ignis aliquis perpetuus flammarum corporalium, neque vermis est corporalis." —AMBROS. in Luc. vii. 14.

[2] O. S. "Quos Christus ad salutem redemit, eos Novatianus damnat ad mortem. Quibus Christus dicit . . . discite a me quia mitis sum; Novatianus dicit Immitis sum."—*De Poenit.* i. 2.

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day the Church had not arrived at any fixed dogma respecting the state of the dead; and (2) that the hopes concerning those who died in a state unfit for heaven were larger and more merciful than those which popular theology has until very recently admitted.

a. Thus after admitting (an important fact) that many in his day held that all punishment would some day be ended, and that there would be "refreshments" (*refrigeria*),[1] which ought now to be hidden from those to whom fear is useful, that, dreading punishment, they may cease from sin, he first says that we ought to leave this to the knowledge of God, "Who knows whom, how, and how long He ought to judge," and adds, "And as we believe that the torments of the devil and of all infidels are eternal, so as to sinners and the impious[2] who are yet Christians, whose works are to be tested and tried in the fire, we believe that the sentence of the Judge will be moderate and mingled with pity."[3]

Petavius here thinks that Jerome has in mind infernal and not purgatorial fires, because he is arguing against Origenists, who thought that they would end after many ages. If so, he here expresses his belief that all Christians would be saved, even though they were sinners and impious. If not, he still grants all for which I have argued—the possibility of a retribution or a purification not necessarily endless beyond the grave.

β. In another passage, rejecting the opinion that "in the end of the world, the devil, coming down from his pride, will repent and be restored to his former place, because no reasonable creature made by God should perish," he admits that it was held by "very many," and that they supported it by the

[1] "Refrigeria quae nunc abscondenda sunt ab his quibus timor est utilis."—JER. in Is. lxvi.

[2] "Atque impiorum," omitted in one MS., probably from dogmatic bias.

[3] Jer. in Is. lxvi. 24. See *supra*, p. 43.

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allegoric explanation of the repentant king of Nineveh as being the devil[1]; and in rejecting this notion of the salvability of the devil as dangerous, and saying that sinners shall be cast into the same fire, he yet takes care to dwell predominantly on the thought, "Merciful and just is the Lord, yea, our God is merciful." "He so spares as to judge, so judges as to be merciful."

γ. A third passage is still more remarkable, and I ask close attention to it.

Pelagius had broadly laid down the view, which accords as nearly as possible with what is now the popular view, that, "In the Day of Judgment the wicked and sinners will not be spared, but will be burned with everlasting fire." Undoubtedly any clergyman who now maintained this view would be regarded as a champion of the popular "orthodoxy"; but the Church of that day, on the contrary, condemned Pelagius for this very statement.

"As to your saying that 'in the Day of Judgment sinners must not be spared, but must be burned up with eternal fires,' who can tolerate it? and that you should preclude the mercy of God, and before the Day of Judgment judge about the sentence of the Judge; so that if He may have wished to spare the wicked and sinners, He cannot do so because of your prescriptions?[2] For you say it is written in Ps. ciii. 'Let sinners and the unjust fail from the earth, so that they may not be'; and in Ps. vi. 'The unjust shall be consumed, and at the same time sinners, and those who forsake God shall be consumed.' And you do not understand that the threatening of God sometimes means clemency, for He does not say that they are 'to be burnt up with eternal fires,'

[1] In Jon. iii. 6, 7.

[2] "Illud vero . . . ferre quis potest et interdicere te misericordiam Dei, et ante diem judicii de sententia judicis judicare, ut si voluerit iniquis et peccatoribus parcere, te praescribente, non possit?"—JER. *in Pelag.* i.

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but that they 'fail from the earth and cease to be unjust.' It is one thing that they should cease from sin and injustice, and another that they should perish for ever and be burnt up with eternal fires. Lastly, Isaiah . . . . says this properly of heretics who, leaving the right path of faith, shall be consumed if they have not willed to return to God, whom they have abandoned."

Then after defining that "unjust" and "sinners" are not the same as "impious," and that the "impious" shall not rise up in the judgment, being pre-judged to perdition, whereas "sinners" should not perish for ever, though they should not rise in the council of the just, Jerome adds, "If, however, Origen says that no rational creature is to be destroyed, and ascribes repentance to the devil, what is that to us who say that the devil and his hosts, and all the ungodly and transgressors perish for ever, and that Christians if they have been overtaken (by death) in sin, are to be saved after punishment?"[1]

Petavius compares with this the similar remark of Gilbert of Poictiers, who says on Ps. i. that "the impious" will not be judged, because they have been judged already, but that "sinners await a sentence which saves by fire."[2]

As to this remark of Pelagius—"In die judicii iniquis et peccatoribus non esse parcendum, sed aeternis eos ignibus exurendos"—although it is so indignantly condemned by St. Jerome, I venture to think that if, five years ago, it had been brought forward, without further hint, at almost any "clerical society," it would at once have been accepted as expressing the opinion of many of those present.

[1] "Si autem Origenes omnes rationabiles creaturas dicit non esse perdendas, quid ad nos qui et Diabolum et satellites ejus, omnesque impios et praevaricatores dicimus perire perpetuo; et Christianos, si in peccato praeventi fuerint, salvandos esse post poenas."—JER. *in Pelag.* i. 28.

[2] "Peccatores vero, exspectare sententiam quae salvat per ignem."

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The Church of the fourth century was, however, so little inclined to accept it that it was made the subject of an express charge against the Welsh heretic in the Synod of Diospolis, A.D. 415. The arguments about it are excessively vague and misty, but Pelagius, who undoubtedly used a good deal of "accommodation" and succeeded (as all admit) in completely mystifying the minds of the good Fathers assembled at Diospolis, "said that he only meant his remark in the sense of Matthew xxv. 46, and that, if any one thought otherwise, he was an Origenist." If the synod was satisfied with this, and yet were at first inclined to regard the statement as heretical, their views must have been exceedingly plastic and exceedingly ill-defined. Not only does St. Jerome, as we have seen, indignantly reject the dogma of Pelagius, but it is also clear from the remarks of St. Augustine that the sentiment of Pelagius was accused of being heretical because it was understood as being meant to deny what the Church accepted as a truth on the authority of 1 Cor. iii. 13—namely, that some would pass through fire and yet be saved.[1] The Synod of Diospolis, and St. Augustine, and St. Jerome, and Dr. Pusey, are all anxious to explain that the suspicion of the synod respecting the "too broad" remark of Pelagius arose not because the Fathers denied an endless hell, but because they believed in a terminable purgatory. So then—after all this controversy—it appears that they all hold exactly what I have been so much attacked for holding—namely, that there is such a thing as a terminable retribution beyond the grave. They condemned in Pelagius the implied notion that there is an endless hell beyond the grave, and that there is no form of future retribution (*e.g.* no purgatory) which is terminable. The Diospolitan bishops and Augustine and Jerome, and the whole Catholic Church in

[1] *De Gestis Pelagii*, iii. 10. On this Synod, see *infra*, p. 339.

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their day, and all Roman Catholics, and most German Protestants, and many English Protestants, all hold the long obliterated doctrine which I trust that I have helped to restore to prominence in many minds, that though some souls may be lost for ever and ever, there is also such a thing as a terminable retribution (call it purgatory, or the probatory fire of the Day of Judgment, or what you will), beyond the grave. The prevalent belief in the Church has been for ages exactly what I said it had been—namely, that (as Dr. Pusey expresses it) there are sinners "who, when their work has been burned, shall be saved, but so as by fire."

δ. St. Jerome sometimes also indicated a view of which glimpses are recognisable in many writers, that what is evil in men may be burnt up without involving their own endless destruction. "If, therefore," he says, "any man have tares in his conscience, these the flame will consume, these the conflagration will devour."[1]

ε. And if any one will read St. Jerome's remarks on Is. v. he will see that while the saint very decisively rejects the salvability of devils, he invariably alters the tone of his language when he speaks of men. Of them he uses language which, while it sounded like the language which had become current in his time, was yet perfectly capable of another explanation. It is clear to me from this circumstance that St. Jerome secretly, though not always consistently, inclined to the "larger hope." In this he resembled his adversary Rufinus, who while in his first apology he eagerly defends himself against the charge of believing that the devil would be saved, is far more ambiguous in the terms he uses about men.[2] And how little the vague terms "eternal," &c., are to be pressed in St. Jerome appears from his use of the term "infinite ages" twice over in a passage where

[1] Jer. in Isaiam, lib. xviii. *ad fin.* [2] See Petav. *l. c.* iii. 8, § 11.

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he is actually discussing the possibility of those "infinite ages" coming to an end.[1]

ζ. Again, in the commentary on Amos he says, "Therefore both Israel, and all heretics, because they had the works of Sodom and Gomorrha, are overthrown like Sodom and Gomorrha, that they may be set free like a brand snatched from the burning. And this is the meaning of the prophet's words, 'Sodom shall be restored as of old,' that he who by his vice is as an inhabitant of Sodom, after the works of Sodom have been burnt in him, may be restored to his ancient state."

I conclude, then, with Daillé—an unprejudiced witness, because vehemently opposed to every deviation from the current opinion—that St. Jerome leaned to this modification of Origenist opinions, which elsewhere he only partially repudiates.[2] Those who know the impassioned ferocity of Jerome's style know how very differently he deals with this opinion and with those which he really repudiates.

3. ST. AUGUSTINE did more than any man to settle the popular conviction in the distinct and definite belief that there is an endless hell. He did this far more by his authority, which was immense, than by his arguments, which, in the one main passage in which he discusses the question, are singularly

[1] In a passage quoted by Rufinus he says that the thought of possible *refrigeria* of the lost should be concealed from those to whom fear is useful, and that we must leave the *quomodo* and *quamdiu* of future judgment to the knowledge and pity of God.—*Invectiv I. in Hieron.* That notion of *refrigeria*, "refreshments," "pauses of torment," &c., in hell, to which some Fathers allude, is found also in the Rabbis, who say that the wicked have every day an hour and a half of rest at the time of prayer, as well as the whole Sabbath—*i.e.* fifty-one hours a week.—*Jalkuth Reubeni*, f. 167, 4; *Jalkuth Chadash*, f. 51, 1, &c. (Stehelin, ii. 54, 56).

[2] Dallaeus, *De Poenis*, 378. "Sunt ergo haec plane Origenica, qualia Hieronymus *non pauca* in commentariis suis immiscuit, quae ipse alibi non quidem omnino sed aliquatemus repudiat." Comp. Bellarmine, *De Purgat.* ii. 1.

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empty and feeble.[1] And yet St. Augustine himself, dubious and tentative as his own language is, also did more than any man to lead the Church into a belief in that terminable retribution—that "purgatorial fire" beyond the grave—that cleansing pain, whether in the intermediate state or at the Day of Judgment —which was my main thought in *Eternal Hope*.[2] For "Eternal Hope" means "hope in the life to come"; and I meant thereby the hope that from some forms of retribution which might fall on us beyond the grave there was a possibility of ultimate deliverance —that there was a "remedial fire" as well as an unending doom.[3]

a. He holds that there are different degrees of suffering among the lost.[4] He admits as tenable the opinion "that the pains of the damned are at certain intervals of time in some measure mitigated." He furnishes decisive evidence of the numbers of those whom he calls "our party of compassion" (*nostri misericordes*).[5] He thinks it necessary in a friendly spirit (*pacifice*) to argue against such views as that all the baptised,[6] or all communicants,[7] or all Christians, even if they lived ill, or all who gave alms, would be saved,[8] showing thereby how far all

[1] See them analysed in the Rev. F. N. Oxenham's *Letter on Everlasting Punishment*, p. 79.

[2] It must not be forgotten that Augustine furnishes us with the strongest proofs of the entirely unsettled state of the question among Catholic Christians even in his day. This is why he finds it necessary to argue (1) against Origenists; (2) against those who thought that all men would be saved; (3) or all baptised Christians; (4) or all but heretics; (5) or all who remained in Catholic communion; (6) or all who had given alms. *De Civ. Dei.* xxi. 18-22; *Enchir.* 67; *ad Dulcit.* 21. "In his *De Civitate Dei*, after speaking of the fire at the judgment, he goes on to change its position . . . and places it between death and the resurrection; yet still he observes his hesitating and conjectural tone." —*Tracts for the Times*, No. 79, p. 41. [3] See *Eternal Hope, passim.*

[4] *Enchir.* c. iii. [5] *De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 17. [6] *Id.* 20.

[7] *Id.* 19 (referring to John vi. 58).

[8] *Id.* 22 (referring to 1 Cor. iii. 15; Eph. v. 30). "Sed qui hoc credunt, et tamen Catholici sunt, humana quadam benevolentia falli videatur."—*Enchir.* 67.

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Christians were from fixed opinions on these subjects. He mentions the notion of those who thought that God would hear the intercessions of His saints, and so render punishment less than endless, or that He might, as in the case of the Ninevites, withdraw His threats.[1] He says in one place that the sacrifice of the altar, and of alms, were propitiations for those who were not very bad, and that even for the very bad they might perhaps be of advantage, "either that there may be a full remission, or certainly that the damnation may be more endurable."[2] Writing on Ps. lxxvii. ("for God will not forget to be gracious"), he argues that the wrath of God, if incompatible with His putting an end to eternal punishment, is not incompatible with His "applying or interposing between their tortures some alleviation."[3] He argues that our Lord's words to Judas apply only to the worst and most impious sinners.[4] In all this he by no means speaks with that dogmatic positiveness about the most intricate problems of the future, and especially of the Intermediate State,[5] which now characterises the most ignorant of mankind. He was far from that air of infallibility with which any rash curate—whether literate or illiterate—now imagines that he can announce *ex cathedrâ* his own entirely valueless opinion. Thus he says of the opinion that the purgatorial fire will in the interval between death and judgment burn away venial sins, "I do not

[1] *Id.* 18. Some of his remarks in 24-28 are meant for a refutation of these views; but they are very much feebler than we should have expected, and are indeed founded on assertions, or on entire misapplications of Scripture.

[2] *Enchir.* cxii.

[3] "Non tamen contineat miserationes suas, non aeterno supplicio finem dando, sed levamen adhibendo, vel interponendo cruciatibus."—AUG. *l. c.* See on this Petr. Lombard, *Sentent.* iv. 46A. "Si valde malis detur mitigatio poenae?"

[4] "Cum hoc Deus non de quibuslibet peccatoribus, sed de sceleratissimis et impiissimis dixerit."—*In Julian.* v. 11.

[5] See *Enchir.* 62; Exam. in Ps. lxxx. *ad fin.*; Ps. cvii.; Hom. iii. *ad Princip.*

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refute it, because perhaps it is true."[1] And of the slower or speedier cleansing of the faithful by fire after this life he says, "It is not incredible, and whether it be so or not may be considered, and either be discovered or remain unknown."[2]

β. It is also observable that St. Augustine believed that Christ by His descent into hell liberated the souls even of sinners, though he introduces this doctrine also with one of his hesitating phrases, "It is not undeservedly believed."[3] The simple fact is that St. Augustine—vast as have been the consequences of his opinions—had very little to say which is authoritative on the subject. Far be it from me to ask the blunt question of Pelagius: "And what is Augustine to me?" (*Et quis est mihi Augustinus?*)[4] But he "was evidently puzzled as to the meaning of Hades," and was so far from sharing the convictions of every infallible modern clergyman on such subjects as these, that, even of the dwelling of the saints in Hades till they were thence delivered by Christ, he only says, "*haud absurde videtur*,"[5] and frankly admits that the nature and meaning of the word "eternal" is still a matter for careful investigation. Even as to 1 Cor. iii. 15, he says he finds it very obscure, and would rather hear others explain it.[6] Largely as he has moulded the eschatological opinions of Christendom, St. Augustine himself when he treats of them by no means shows that "unhesitating confidence," or that "vehement and intrepid dogmatism" which so largely helped to secure acceptance for his

[1] *De Civitate Dei*, xxi. 20, "Non redarguo, quia forsitan verum est."

[2] *Ench.* 69. "Incredibile non est et utrum ita sit quaeri potest et aut inveniri aut latere."

[3] "Christi animam venisse usque ad ea loca in quibus peccatores cruciantur ut eos solveret a tormentis quos esse salvandos . . . judicabat, non immerito creditur."—*De Genes. ad lit.* xii. 33, § 63.

[4] As reported by Orosius.

[5] *De Civ. Dei*, xx. 15.

[6] *De Fide et Op.* 15, 16.

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theological conclusions.[1] "Non abhorret, quantum arbitror a ratione veritatis"; "Incredibile non est"; "Quod quidem non ideo confirmo, quoniam non repello"; "Non immerito creditur"; "Non absurde videtur"; "Forsitan verum est":—such are the very indecisive answers of the oracle on most important points of Christian eschatology. I confess that the impression left on my mind is that he would never have wavered as he has done, nor decided as he has done, if he had thoroughly realised the true meaning of *aionios*—of which he was not aware, because of his imperfect knowledge of Greek.

And one more point is certainly remarkable,—which is that though he unquestionably accepted the doctrine of endless torments for the damned, he never in a single place tells us that the Church had specifically condemned the hope of Origen *as regards men only*. He invariably mixes up that hope—as other Fathers do—with the irrelevant and to us impractical question of the salvability of devils, or with speculations about cycles of existence and antenatal life. Thus in the two passages most generally quoted to prove that the Church had condemned Universalism, St Augustine says, "This the judges [at Diospolis] understood of that which in truth the Church most worthily detests in Origen, that they who the Lord says will be punished with eternal punishment, and the devil himself and his angels will after a time . . . be freed from punishment and will be united in a society of blessedness with the saints who reign with God."[2] In the other he rejects Origen's Universalism by simply saying that the Church rightly rejected him (*jure reprobavit*)—for what? Not for his large hope, but "for this and other things, and most of all for the alternations of bliss and misery"; for he adds Origen "lost the semblance of mercy by assigning

[1] See Milman's *History of Christianity*, ii. 276; Bishop Forbes, *On the Articles*, ii. 334.

[2] *De Gestis Pelagii*, iii. 10.

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to the saints true sufferings in punishment and false bliss"—false because it was not eternally secured to them.[1] It is therefore not fair to quote the phrase "*jure reprobavit*" and "*Hoc detestatur Ecclesia*" of Universalism pure and simple. The "*hoc*" in question was not this one point, but this one point as a single element—and that by St. Augustine's own admission the least questionable element—in a vast mass of other opinions. And in reading these passages we have to remark that he offers no *arguments* whatever against Origen's "merciful opinion." He thinks to knock it down (1) by saying that the Church has condemned it taken in connection with other opinions which the Church condemned more; and (2) by a bald dogmatic assertion—respecting which he himself elsewhere expresses great doubts—that it is against the Word of God.[2]

(1) As to his first point, we should have been glad if he had told us where the Church condemned it. It would have been quite beside the mark to argue that the Church condemned it because—long after Origen had been laid in his honoured grave, and long after he had moulded the best thoughts of many of the best thinkers of the Church—"Origenism" (which is a very large word indeed) was condemned, or was supposed to have been condemned in the lump. Indeed I feel the most firm conviction that even Universalism never would have been condemned as a general hope, or a permissible opinion, if it had not been erroneously mixed up with many other speculations which the Church rejected.

(2) St. Augustine quotes no text in this place to show that such a hope is "against the Word of God" (*contra recta Dei verba*); but he doubtless had in

[1] In *De Haeresibus*, c. 243, he speaks of the liberation of the devil, and mixes all the notions together, *e.g.* "De purgatione et liberatione ac rursus, post longum tempus, ad eadem mala, revolutione rationalis universae."

[2] *De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 17.

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mind the text to which he refers so frequently, viz. Matt. xxv. 46. Like so many of the Latin Fathers, &c., St. Augustine erroneously supposed that *aionios* necessarily meant "endless." This mistake influences their entire view.[1] The ablest and most learned Greek Fathers knew better; they knew that *aionios* meant "that which belongs to the future aeon," and that "aeonian life" and "aeonian punishment" have no other meaning than the life and the punishment of the world to come. The endlessness of beatitude rests on far other "texts" than this; the endlessness of misery for some may be the necessary deduction from other Scriptures; but it is nowhere indisputably asserted, and certainly can only be inferred from this passage by an ignorance which is unaware of, or a prejudice which sets at defiance, the most indisputable facts. Probably the champions of the popular view will continue to repeat—in spite of its ten-times-demonstrated feebleness—what I again call this battered and worthless argument. St. Augustine thought that *aionios* meant "endless" partly (perhaps) because his knowledge of Greek was "late-acquired, and at the best imperfect"[2]; but a total ignorance of Greek, and of all things else, is no excuse for the repetition of the error, in face of the most positive demonstration. If Augustine had not been born an African and trained as a Manichee, nay, if he had only faced the labour of learning Greek thoroughly—a labour from which he confesses that he had shrunk[3]—the whole stream of Christian theology might have been purer and more sweet. Take, for instance, Augustine's direct "argument" about *aion* and *aionios*. To call it an "argument" is an extravagant compliment, for it is a mere untenable and self-refuted assertion. *Aion*, he says, does often

[1] "Cum falsum aliquid in principio sumserint . . . necesse est eos in ea quae consequuntur incurrere."—LACTANT. *Inst.* iii. 24.

[2] See Tillemont.

[3] *Confess.* i. 14.

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mean a limited period, but *aionios* always means "endless." This is a specimen of that asserting style of which Augustine is a master. It instantly occurs to him, however, that this is not *primâ facie* true, and indeed the two passages which he quotes (Lev. xvi. 29, 36) are sufficient to show that he is wrong. His attempt to get rid of, and explain away, these usages, is really beneath all refutation. It is impossible that any moderately-educated modern reader should regard it as adequate. Huet admits the failure: "Quod est literam destruere," he asks, "si hoc non est?" Augustine himself is so conscious of the falsity of this piece of philological criticism, that he takes refuge in the old assertion that torments must be endless because bliss is endless. In such "arguments" they may acquiesce who are content with the impossible and obsolete philology of fourteen centuries ago.[1]

(3) And yet this seems to have been the main consideration which swayed the hesitating conclusions of St. Augustine. It was helped out, however, by another no less untenable. He shut himself out from the inferences which naturally spring from the mercy of God by arguing that the devils will certainly be condemned to endless torments. If, then, *their* punishment (he argued) is consistent with God's absolute love, so must be also the endless punishment of men. The argument is futile on every ground, but is sufficiently nullified by the fact that of the nature and degree of Satanic and diabolic culpability we know absolutely nothing.[2]

I end with two passages of St. Augustine, written it may be in his milder moods, but very instructive:—

i. Speaking of Dives and Lazarus, he says, "How that flame of Hades is to be understood, that bosom of Abraham, that tongue of the rich man, that finger

[1] Aug. c. *Priscillianistas*, 6, 7.
[2] Aug. *De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 17-23; Baur, *Dogmengesch.* ii. 440.

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of the beggar, that thirst of torment, that drop of refreshment, is perhaps scarcely discoverable by those who inquire with gentleness, but by those who contend in a quarrelsome spirit, *never*."[1]

ii. The other is as to the meaning of the word "eternal." Again and again has St. Augustine dogmatised on this philological question. He makes loud assertions about it, with which his earlier Manichaean proclivities had much more to do than his imperfect knowledge of philology. Yet there, were moments in which even he is forced to waver and in his commentary on Matt. xxv. 46 he feels himself obliged to repudiate much of his own dogmatism on the subject. "I would not," he says, "say this so as to seem to close the door to a more careful consideration as to the punishments of the lost, and the sense in which they are in Scripture called eternal." *O si sic omnia!* Had he always spoken in this modest tone he might have saved the Christian world from many perils.

It would have been far better for the Church if her mediaeval admiration of Augustine had been less blind, and if her sense of his fallibility, and the many limitations of his knowledge and intellectual power, had been more decided. It would have been above all well for her if she had noticed that, in spite of all his dogmatism, he did not, in his humbler moments, even profess to have closed the door of inquiry on a subject concerning which his means of coming to an authoritative conclusion were far inferior to those of some of his contemporaries, many of his predecessors, and thousands of those who have approached the inquiry with that added knowledge of many centuries which God has vouchsafed to His Church by the Light of His Holy Spirit, shining age after age in the hearts of His Prophets and His Sons.

[1] *De Gen. ad Litt.* viii. 6.

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NOTE ON ACCOMMODATION (Οἰκονομία, Συγκατάβασις, *Dispensatio*).

The first Church writer who uses the word "oeconomy" in the sense of "accommodation" is Clemens of Alexandria (*Strom.* vi.). To use "oeconomy" was also called acting κατὰ συμπεριφοράν. The word "condescension" (συγκατάβασις) occurs in St. Chrysostom (*Hom.* iii. *in Tit.*). The Fathers attribute "oeconomy" not only to St. Paul (*e.g.* when he circumcised Timothy), but even to our Lord. Thus St. Basil is so bold as to remark on Matt. xxiv. 37, τοῦτο διὰ προσποιητῆς ἀγνοίας οἰκονομεῖ (*Ep.* 8, p. 84). This surely is a bad instance of irreverent reverence.

"Towards the uninitiated," says Gieseler,[1] "the Alexandrians regarded a certain accommodation as necessary, which might venture to make use even of falsehood for the attainment of a good end, nay, which was even obliged to do so; and hence they did not scruple to acknowledge such an accommodation in many ecclesiastical doctrines."

The doctrine came to them from Plato, who allows the use of falsehood as a kind of moral medicine.[2] Philo borrowed from Plato the same notion. Truth ought always to be used, he says, to the initiated and the noble-natured; but those whose natures are dull and blunt, and blind and childish, need a sort of healing treatment. "Let all such, therefore, learn things that are false by means of which they may be benefited if they cannot acquire sober-mindedness by means of truth."[3]

From Plato and Philo this unwholesome tendency—which it will be seen goes farther than the mere suppression of truths beyond the comprehension of the hearer—was inherited by the great Alexandrian Fathers.

"They," says St. Clemens, "are not in reality liars who συμπεριφερόμενοι (take circuitous methods) because of the 'oeconomy' of salvation."[4]

"Let a man, however," says Origen, referring to the above-quoted passage of Plato, "who is obliged to speak falsely, be very careful so to use falsehood sometimes as a spice and medicament, otherwise," he adds, "we shall be judged as enemies of Him who said, 'I am the truth.'"[5]

Again, in another passage, Origen quotes the remark of Solon, that he had not proposed the best laws possible, but the best he could; and applies it to the Christian doctrine of punishments, the threat of which was best adapted to the amendment of obstinate sinners.[6]

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[1] *Eccl. History*, i. 234, E. tr.

[2] *De Rep.* iii. ἐν φαρμάκου εἴδει.

[3] Philo, *Quod Deus sit immutabilis*, p. 302.

[4] Clem. Alex. *Strom.* vi. p. 802.

[5] *Strom.* vi. ap. Jer. *Apol.* 1 *in Rufin.* 18. There is a tract on "accommodation" by F. A. Carus, Leipz. 1793.

[6] *Contr. Celsum*, iii. 159.

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It was to eschatology especially that this doctrine was applied. Both Clemens and Origen avowed that they had certain esoteric doctrines,[1] and the latter expressly implies that they were in part eschatological. In the *Stromata*, St. Clemens says that there were some things which he was afraid to write, because he was on his guard even against speaking them.[2]

Origen speaks of "hidden mysteries of God which must not be committed to paper," and will not linger on some subjects "because they are known to the learned, and can never be known to the unlearned."[3]

So, too, Jerome alludes to the refreshments "which are now to be hidden from those to whom fear is useful, that, dreading punishment, they may cease from sin."[4] It is clear that he both believed in these "refreshments," and agreed with those to whose opinions he is referring.

Synesius, when he accepted the bishopric of Ptolemais, openly accepted the prae-existence of souls, and denied the resurrection of the body, and believed that "the pure truth could never become the popular faith." He held the Platonic distinction between exoteric and esoteric truth, and merely pledged himself not to teach in public any acknowledged heresy.[5]

The reader will find much that bears on the subject in *Tracts for the Times*, No. 80, "On Reserve in Communicating Religious Knowledge."

If any one will read Schröckh, *Kirchengeschichte*, x. 380-395, or Daillé, *De Usu Patrum*, vi., and Cardinal Perron, *De Eucharistia* (*passim*), he will, I think, see how many of Dr. Pusey's arguments about the supposed "positive teaching" of some of his authorities fall at once to the ground.

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[1] Orig. *c. Cels.* i. p. 7.

[2] φοβούμενος λέγειν ἃ καὶ γράφειν ἐφυλάξαμην, *Strom.* i. p. 324, and speaking of eschatology, τὰ δ' ἄλλα σιγῶ δοξάζων τὸν Κύριον. Comp. Origen, *De Princip.* i. vi. § 1.

[3] Orig. *in Ep. Rom.* ii. 479, *Hom. in Lev.* ix. 244.

[4] Jer. in Is. lxvi. *ad fin.*

[5] Synesius, *Ep.* 105.

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CHAPTER X.

ORIGEN.

"Vir magnus ab infantia."—JER. *ad. Psammach.*

"Condemno, inquis, et pro haeretico declaro! Ita sane te et orthodoxiae studiosum, et formularum caute loquendi laudabiliter tenacem ostendis: sed nimium in judicandis aliis festinas. Ignosce aliquid, si potest ignosci, viris pietate coruscis haud fucata; viris de omni Ecclesiâ Christiana tam praeclare alibi meritis; viris quorum et aliqui martyrii coronâ ornati, coram throno Servatoris, sicut soles fulgent, imo etiamnum pro salute militantis ecclesiae orant."—DIETELMAIR, *De Descensu Christi*, p. 35.

> "Now, Truth, perform thine office! waft aside
> The curtain drawn by prejudice and pride;
> Reveal—the man is dead—to wondering eyes
> This more than monster in his native guise."
>
> COWPER.

WHATEVER may have been his speculative errors, on which I will touch farther on, few men have ever rendered to the Church such splendid services, or lived from childhood to old age a life so noble and so blameless as Origen; nay, more—abused and anathematised as he has now been for centuries—it has been granted to few men—perhaps scarcely even to the far less learned and far less profound Augustine—to mould so decisively on a multitude of subjects the opinions of the Church of God. Amid the rage of his enemies, great saints sustained and God Himself blessed his cause.[1]

[1] Tillemont, *Origène*, art. i. "Que Dieu même sembloit se declarer pour lui, en faisant entrer par lui dans la vérité et dans le sein de son

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Unlike Augustine,—who, though he became a pillar of orthodoxy, was for many years a Manichee, and for many years a half-heathen rhetorician, and who bore till his latest day the traces of his Manichaean heresy and his rhetorical training,—Origen was a Christian from his birth. Unlike Augustine, who, though he passed by repentance into a life of holiness, lived many years of his life in concubinage and in sinful lusts, Origen, from his early boyhood, bore a character on which not even the most virulent of his enemies could fix one authentic stain.

In briefest outline,[1] what is the story of the life of Origen—this greatest of all the great Christian teachers of the three first Christian centuries?[2]

Origen Adamantius[3] was born at Alexandria about A.D. 186. He was the son of the martyr Leonides, who trained him from his earliest years in the Holy Scriptures. Even as a child he showed an intellect so powerful and precocious that his father, though he would often check his eager questionings, yet in his joy at the birth of such a son would often come to him when he was asleep and reverently kiss the bosom "in which it seemed so clear that the Holy

Église, ceux que cette même Église met aujourd'hui entre ses plus grands ornemens."

[1] For this slight sketch of the life of Origen I have consulted (among others) Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Panegyr.*; Eusebius, *H. E.* vi. 2-4, 8, 10, 16, and *passim;* Socrates, *H. E.* ii. 35, &c., and vi. 13; Sozomen, *H. E.* viii. 11-14; Nicephorus, *H. E.* v. 2-33; Suidas, *s. v.*; Vincentius Lirinensis, *c. Haer*, xxiii.; Huet's *Origeniana;* Tillemont, vol. iii. (ed. 1699); Baronius, *Annales;* Cave, *Lives of the Primitive Fathers*, i. 213-240; Schröckh, *Christl. Kirchengesch.* iv. x. 158-266, xviii. 40-60; Redepenning's *Origenes*, and Guerike, *De Schola Alexandrinâ.*

[2] Tillemont, *Origène*, art. i. *ad in.*

[3] Cave says he was so called "either from the unwearied temper of his mind and that strength of reason wherewith he compacted his discourses, or his firmness and constancy in religion, notwithstanding all the assaults made against it."—*Lives*, i. 215. Others attribute the name to his indefatigable toil, like the other names, Chalcenteros, Chalceutes, and Syntaktes (Suidas; Jer. *Ep.* xvii.). But it appears from Eusebius that it was his proper name. See Huet, *Origeniana*, p. 81 (in De La Rue's edition, vol. iv.).

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Spirit of God had made His temple."[1] From his father's training he passed into that of St. Clemens and Ammonius Saccas.

In the tenth year of the Emperor Severus a violent persecution broke out against the Christians, and the boy showed so passionate a desire for martyrdom that he was only restrained by the tears and entreaties of his mother. But when Leonides[2] was arrested, Origen was so eager to share his father's fate that his mother could only keep him at home by concealing his clothes,[3] so that he could do nothing but write to his father, entreating him not to succumb.[4] Leonides was beheaded, and Origen, then but sixteen years old, was left the sole support of his widowed mother, and of his six younger brothers. As his father's goods were confiscated, the family would have been in absolute destitution, had not Origen been adopted by a wealthy Alexandrian matron. Dislike to holding any communion with a notorious heretic—a certain Paul of Antioch—who also shared the lady's hospitality, made him eager to win an independence for himself by taking pupils in "grammar." This he was easily able to do from the astonishing range of his acquisitions, which comprised also ethics, logic, rhetoric, geometry, philosophy, and—later on—even a knowledge of Hebrew, which was at that time extremely rare.[5]

Applied to by heathens to teach them the elements of Christianity, he won many over to the faith. Among his first converts were the martyr Plutarchus and his brother Heraclas, who succeeded Origen as Catechist in the school of Alexandria, and sub-

[1] *Pectus facit theologum.*

[2] Suidas is mistaken when he says that Leonides was a bishop.

[3] *τὴν πᾶσαν αὐτοῦ ἐσθῆτα ἀποκρυψαμένη οἴκοι μένειν ἀνάγκην ἐπῆγεν.* —EUSEB. *H. E.* vi. 2.

[4] *ἔπεχε μὴ δι' ἡμᾶς ἄλλο τι φρονήσῃς.*—SUID.

[5] Jer. *De Virr. Illustr.* He says that he mastered Hebrew in a few months. *Ep. ad Paulam.* xxii.; Greg. Thaumaturg. *Panegyr.*

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sequently became Patriarch of Alexandria. The martyrs Serenus and Herais were also among his pupils,[1] and later on the confessor Ambrosius. Called by Demetrius at the age of eighteen to the catechetical chair of the famous school in his native city,[2] he distinguished himself by the zeal and assiduity with which again and again he risked his life in attending upon the martyrs in prison and on their way to death.

Meanwhile his life resembled his teaching,[3] and, as even Epiphanius admits, his teaching equalled the sanctity of his life.[4] He lived in the strictest asceticism, and having given up his secular work in order to devote himself exclusively to sacred teaching, he sold his precious books of heathen literature that he might gain by the sale of them the fourpence a day on which he lived. He tasted no wine; he slept on the bare ground; he fasted constantly, even to the severe injury of his health; he wore no shoes, and would not possess two coats.[5] To avoid all suspicion and all possibility of impurity to which his youth might otherwise have subjected him,—seeing that he numbered women as well as men among his pupils, and that in times of persecution he had to visit them at all hours of the day and night,—he was misled by a mistaken but heroic literalism into that self-mutilation of which, as an intellectual error, he afterwards repented.[6] For that error—due as it was to an imperfect judgment, but to the noblest moral motives—he received at the time not only the forgiveness, but the admiring approval of the Patriarch Demetrius.

[1] See Baronius, *Ann.* A.D. 299.

[2] The first five holders of the chair of catechist at Alexandria were: 1, Pantaenus; 2, Clemens; 3, Origen; 4, Heraclas; 5, Dionysius; 6, Athenodorus.

[3] Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 3.

[4] Epiphan. *Haer.* lxiv. 2; comp. Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 3, *οἷον γοῦν τὸν λόγον τοιόνδε φασὶ καὶ τὸν τρόπον*; Nicephorus, *H. E.* v. 4.

[5] Matt. x. 10.

[6] Matt. xix. 12. Eusebius rightly says that "though it was a youthful error, it yet gave proof of the greatest faith and temperance."—*H. E.* vi. 8.

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He was himself so little desirous of fame that he endeavoured to throw into the shade his own immensely increasing reputation. But a glory which was now spreading throughout the whole Church excited the envy of many, and among others of Demetrius himself. After a short visit to Rome in the time of Zephyrinus—about A.D. 211—he returned to Alexandria, resigned part of his work to Heraclas, and devoted himself to the study of Hebrew and of Gentile philosophy, in which, according to Porphyry, he made great advance. About this time he converted from the Valentinian heresy the devout and wealthy Ambrosius, who, by supplying him with seven amanuenses, and other means of study, enabled him to begin those vast biblical labours which produced so rich a fruit. About A.D. 216 he visited Caesarea, and—though he was still young, and only a layman—was invited by the Bishops Theoctistus of Caesarea and Alexander of Jerusalem to discourse publicly in the church. Although his conduct was perfectly in accordance with precedent, it furnished the jealous Demetrius with his first occasion for an attack upon him. It was at Caesarea, in all probability, that he began his great work, the *Tetrapla*, afterwards developed into the *Hexapla*, a work sufficient to eternise the name of any man. By virtue of this task he rendered an inestimable service to the Church of all ages, and must be regarded as the founder of the school of biblical criticism.

Hurried home by the envy of Demetrius, he resumed his catechetical labours; but being summoned to Greece in order to encounter the growth of heresy, he was, on his way, ordained Presbyter by the Palestinian bishops at the instigation of the sainted Bishop of Jerusalem. It was this circumstance that made the enmity of Demetrius blaze out in the most undisguised manner; and he had the brutality not only to heap his invectives on the good bishops of

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Palestine,[1] but even to taunt the man whom in his heart he must have felt to be so incomparably his superior, with that rash act of his youth which in former days he had himself not only condoned, but openly praised.[2]

It may have been during this journey that Origen had his famous interview at Antioch with Mammaea, the mother of the Emperor Alexander Severus, who desired to see him from the universal honour in which he was held.

Meanwhile his life was embittered by the hostility of his bishop,[3] to whom it was permitted (as it has been penally permitted to thousands like him) to make sad a heart which surely God had not made sad, and to poison the very springs of happiness in the life of the saintly scholar. Taunted not only with the mistaken heroism of his early sacrifice to purity, but with a story of which the real facts

[1] To this disgraceful jealousy the ancients unhesitatingly attribute the outburst of attacks against Origen. *τρέπεται διὰ τοῦτο Δημετρίῳ εἰς μῖσος τὸ φίλτρον καὶ οἱ ἔπαινοι εἰς τοὺς ψόγους* (Photius). He adds that Pamphilus stated this distinctly—*καὶ τὰς μὲν αἰτίας ἐξ ὧν συνέβη τὰς διαβολὰς ἐκραγῆναι τῷ Ὠριγένει ταύτας φησί.*—Id. *Bibl. Cod.* 118.

[2] Origen himself (*Praef. in Joann. Opp.* vi. 101, ed. Benedict) says that he was banished by the enmity of Demetrius. "His ordination was infinitely resented by Demetrius, ... and now the wind is turned into a blustering quarter, and nothing but anathemas are thundered against him from Alexandria."—CAVE. Eusebius ascribes this man's conduct to envy at the honour, learning, and virtue of Origen.—*H. E.* vi. 8. "Trained as a peasant, he would be unlikely to understand one by whom he was so absolutely eclipsed."—EUSEB. *Chron.* St. Jerome says that he was carried away by such a burst of fury and madness as to write against him to all the world.—*Cat. Virr. illustr.* liv. "Ardore quodam aemulationis (ut est captus hominum) incensus apud episcopos totius orbis eum [not for heresy, but] tamquam absurdissimi facinoris reum notare tentabat."—BARONIUS, *Ann.* A.D. 230. See too Schröckh, iv. 33.

[3] Jerome speaks of a letter in which Origen fiercely attacks (*lacerat atque invehitur*) Demetrius. If he did so, under such fearful provocation, it would show that he was human. Jerome was the very last man who had a right to find fault with such language; but the only passage which he quotes is signally calm, moderate, and self-restrained. (Jer. *in Ruf.* ii. 5.)

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will perhap never be known, and which is probably a wicked fabrication,[1] but which — even if it be true—leaves no stain upon his character, but rather the reverse, Origen was driven from Alexandria by a Synod of Egyptian Bishops under the influence of Demetrius. Having in vain tried to procure his degradation from the priesthood by this synod, Demetrius got together some other bishops, creatures of his own, and procured his degradation.[2] But this, be it observed, was not for any of his opinions, respecting which, so far as we know, no word was said.[3] Even this was not enough for episcopal envy.[4] Since Origen was warmly welcomed

[1] It is not even alluded to by Eusebius or Pamphilus, or by Porphyry, who had seen Origen; or by his contemporary, Dionysius of Alexandria; nor is it mentioned by St. Jerome, Rufinus, Vincent of Lerins, or Theophilus of Alexandria—bitter as some of them were. It first occurs in the weak, credulous, and violent Epiphanius, who, envenomed as he was against Origen, whom he could not understand, yet admits that many foolish stories were current against him (Epiphan. *Haer.* lxiv. 229), and, in his worst and weakest manner, adopts and circulates this story. (See Tillemont, iii. 356; Baronius, *Ann.* A.D. 253.)

[2] These two Egyptian synods are mentioned in the *Apology of Pamphilus ap.* Photius, *Cod.* cxviii. St. Jerome says that they were actuated by sheer envy of his greatness, as was also the synod at Rome (*apud Rufin. Invect.* ii.), and he says expressly that *none of the three condemned him for heresy.* "Urbs Roma ipsa contra hunc cogit senatum, *non propter dogmatum novitatem, non propter haeresim,* ut nunc adversum eum rabidi canes simulant, sed quia gloriam eloquentiae ejus et scientiae ferre non poterat et illo dicente omnes muti putabantur."—*Ap. Rufin. Invect.* ii. And yet we are constantly told —so reckless is the way in which prejudice will snatch at the falsest assertion—that Universalism was condemned by these two Egyptian synods! A cause which thus uses the weapons of falsified history cannot in the long run prosper.

[3] Those who venture to tell us that Origen's views of future restoration were condemned in these Egyptian synods and at Rome, not only state what is the reverse of fact, but seem unable to see that if those views had been condemned the case of those who embrace them is indefinitely strengthened by the circumstance that, in spite of such supposed condemnation, the best part of the Church still held Origen in the highest honour, and treated his excommunication as a mere dead letter.

[4] Dr. Newman calls Origen "a victim of Episcopacy."—*Hist. Essays,* i. 406.

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and protected by the bishops of Palestine, Phoenicia, Arabia, and Achaia, Demetrius wrote to every bishop whom he could influence to procure his excommunication—a thing which it was not difficult for a Patriarch of Alexandria to do, especially when there was no one to dispute his own party statements. Ordinary bishops, in those days, it must be remembered, were often men of neither theological nor secular learning, and it would not be difficult to imagine that many modern teachers, living and dead, of the purest life and the profoundest learning, would have had little chance of escaping "degradation," "excommunication," or any other penalty which theological hatred can inflict, if their fate depended on isolated metropolitans, and meetings of provincial clergymen. Demetrius soon after went to his account; but though Heraclas succeeded him, Origen was not recalled, and thus some of the noblest works of Christian antiquity, including the ablest ancient defence of Christianity, and commentaries upon a large part of the Bible, were written by a "degraded" presbyter and an excommunicated exile![1]

His *Hexapla* was called *Opus Ecclesiae*, as though it were a very special treasure of the whole Church; but the local Church for which he had laboured, night and day, in zeal and holiness, had been influenced by the spleen of one heart to drive him from her bosom. "Calm, pitying, he retired." No word of anger escaped him. No word of anger, at any rate, is found in his extant writings, and very few even of apology and explanation. He left his

[1] "All this combustion vanished into smoke, Origen still retaining his priesthood, publicly preaching in the Church," &c.—CAVE, *l. c.* On the total disregard of these censures in the Churches of Palestine, Arabia, Greece, &c., see a good note of Valesius in his edition of Eusebius, p. 124. Doucin says that "the storm raised against him did not hinder him from being consulted as the oracle of Asia and Greece, or from being called the '*Master of the Churches.*' Even Rome respected him, and Egypt seemed to repent for having treated him so ill."—*Hist. de l'Origenisme*, p. 1.

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cause to God. He found in Palestine an honoured home, and all the rest of his life was passed in the same blameless and beautiful tenor. It was at this period that he became the teacher of St. Athenodorus and of his great and glorious brother—Origen's early panegyrist—St. Gregory the Wonder-worker; others of his pupils were Bishop Theodorus of Jerusalem, and Dionysius, afterwards Patriarch of Alexandria. It was at this period, too, that he reconverted to the orthodox belief Beryllus, Bishop of Bostra, who on more than one occasion gave him public thanks.[1] Excommunicate and "heretic" as he has been called, he was yet invited to be present at a general synod in Arabia, in which he won over a new sect of heretics by his arguments, and also saved Arabia from the spread of the Elcesaite heresy.[2] At this time, too, he wrote his great work against Celsus, and his treatise on Martyrdom, to encourage Ambrosius and the presbyter Prototectus to face death. He might console himself under the evil jealousy of Demetrius, while he had the love and esteem of Alexander of Jerusalem, and Theoctistus of Caesarea, and Firmilian of Caesarea in Cappadocia, and St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, and many more among the contemporary Bishops and Saints of God.

By this time Decius (A.D. 249-251) had succeeded to the empire. Origen—boundless as was the energy which won for him the admiring titles of Chalcenteros (brazen-bowelled), and Chalceutes (brazier)—was now utterly worn out with sorrows and persecutions; with the violence which more than once in life he had endured at the hands of Pagan persecutors; with lifelong poverty and severe self-denial; with long journeyings and inexhaustible labours. Perhaps he

[1] St. Jer. *s. v.* Beryllus.

[2] He speaks of these Elcesaites in his Hom. in Ps. lxxxii. *ap.* Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 38. They were a Judaising sect—chiefly in Palestine, who denied the divinity of Christ. (See Marcossius, *De Haereticis*, p. 151.)

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was still more worn and wearied with the fierce hatred which had been stirred up against him; with the wilful misrepresentation of his opinions, against which he appealed in vain; with the interpolation of his books by enemies; with the circulation of the deadliest calumnies concerning him; with the meanness, the perversity, the stupidity, the ingratitude of mankind; with the narrow, remorseless ignorance of an embittered ecclesiasticism. We know of no man in the whole Christian era, except St. Paul, who laboured so incessantly, and rendered to the Church such inestimable services. We know of no man, except St. Paul, who had to suffer from such black and bitter ingratitude. He, the converter of the heathen, the strengthener of the martyrs, the profoundest of Christian teachers, the greatest and most learned of the interpreters of Scripture,—he to whom kings and bishops and philosophers had been proud to listen—he who had refuted the ablest of all the assailants of Christianity—he who had founded the first school of biblical exegesis and biblical philology—he who had done more for the honour and the knowledge of the Oracles of God, not only than all his assailants (for that is not saying much), but than all the then bishops and writers of the Church put together—he who had known the Scriptures from infancy, who had vainly tried to grasp in boyhood the crown of martyrdom, who had been the honoured teacher of saints, who had been all his life long a confessor—he in the very errors of whose life was more of nobleness than in the whole lives of his assailants—he who had lived a life more apostolic, who did more and suffered more for the truth of Christ than any man after the first century of our era, and whose accurately measurable services stand all but unapproachable by all the centuries,—he who himself tells us that he had consecrated to God's service, not some parts of his life, but all his

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actions[1]—had now reached the time of his welcome death. Persecution began once more to rage. He whose father was a martyred saint—he who would have been a martyred saint at the age of sixteen if his mother had suffered him — was not likely to shrink from martyrdom when, bowed down with labours and sorrows, he had reached the age of nearly seventy years. But his persecutors—almost as cruel as his ecclesiastical enemies—desired only to torture him, while they withheld from him the martyr's longed-for crown. He was seized and imprisoned, and loaded with fetters, but kept alive in the midst of torments. Fire was applied to his limbs. Heavy masses of iron were laid on him. For many days his feet were stretched four holes apart in the stocks in agonising tension. He bore it all with patient magnanimity, and, if not under those torments, yet in consequence of them, he died—a man who may have erred, as millions of men have erred, but a martyr and a saint if ever there lived on earth a martyr and a saint of God.[2] From the fury of the heathen, from the worse fury of professing Christians, he passed to the presence of his Saviour, into a peace in which he can but cast a pitying smile—if to souls in bliss there be any knowledge of things on earth—at the posthumous dishonour heaped on his memory by men who verily think, in their ignorance, that they have a zeal for God.

"Certainly," says Mosheim, "if any man deserves to stand first in the catalogue of saints and martyrs and to be annually held up as an example to Christians, this is the man; for, except the apostles of Jesus Christ and their companions, I know of no one

[1] *In Joann. proem.*

[2] Pamphilus called Origen's death a "martyrdom," and the name was freely given to the endurance of cruel and dangerous tortures, even if the sufferer survived for a time. See Origen, *Opp. iv. Append.* 14 (ed. De La Rue. Paris, 1759) He probably died in A.D. 253, three years after the Decian persecution.

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among all those ennobled and honoured as saints, who excelled him in virtue and holiness." "There were homilies before his," says Canon Westcott, "but he fixed the type of a popular exposition. His *Hexapla* was the greatest textual enterprise of ancient times; his treatise on 'First Principles' the earliest attempt at a systematic view of the Christian faith. Both in criticism and interpretation his labours marked an epoch."

And this is the man—the man who proved himself the first writer, the profoundest thinker, the greatest educationist, the most accurate critic, the most honoured preacher, the holiest confessor of his age—the man who first laid down the lines of a systematic study of the Bible—the man whose labours are the eternal heritage of the Church—the man at whose feet saints and martyrs had been glad to sit—this man, whose whole life was one continuous martyrdom of seventy years—this is the man at whom every self-contented sciolist, and every ignorant Pharisee, has thought himself entitled to fling a stone, on the ground that his enemies—who themselves largely appropriated (as Jerome did) the results of his labours—asserted that he had erred in speculative opinions! Whether and to what extent he did so err, we shall perhaps be enabled to see, but I for one will never mention the name of Origen without the love, and the admiration, and the reverence due to one of the greatest and one of the best of the saints of God. I know nothing so deplorable as to read the malignant nonsense which has been written about him by such writers as Nicephorus and Suidas, and by many who are not worthy so much as to kiss the hem of his garment. That these should write of the author of the *Hexapla* and the *Book against Celsus* in a tone of patronage; that all the lies circulated against him by wicked gossip should have been credulously swallowed; that Baronius

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and Bellarmine, Luther and Beza should have openly doubted whether he was not doomed to endless torments, is sufficiently painful and shameful.[1] But that forgers, like the Pseudo-Caesarius, should venture to talk of "the insane and impious Origen"; that the "feeble hands iniquitously just" of men who never bore one of his trials, or emulated one of his virtues, or rendered any service whatever to the Church of Christ, or read one of his books, or could so much as understand five lines of them if they attempted to do so;—that men without pity, without purity, without learning, without humility, without any knowledge of Scripture, or of theology, or of history, or of God, should still write of him as they venture to do—is one of the most deplorable of the many deplorable facts which face us in page after page of ecclesiastical controversy. If the legend of Belisarius begging for an *obolus* had been true, it would have been less calculated to awaken our indignation than the fact that an Origen was condemned by the machinations of a Theophilus, and at the command of a Justinian. Even one who joins in the outcry against his asserted heresies—Vincent of Lerins—speaks thus of him: "If a life confers authority, great was his industry, great his purity, patience, endurance; if nobility or bearing, what could be nobler than to be born in a house glorified by martyrdom? Thus deprived, for

[1] Whole volumes have been written to prove that Origen was in hell. A certain St. Mechtildis, in the fourteenth century, saw Samson, Solomon, and Origen in torments, and was told that it was to show the peril incurred by the strongest, wisest, and most learned. "Origenem," says Luther, "jamdudum diris devovi." But Luther only judged of him through Augustine, and is not here alluding to his eschatology. "Peu de personnes," says Doucin (*Hist. de l'Origenisme*, p. 81), "dans la communion de Rome, osent douter de sa damnation éternelle." Picus of Mirandola was all but condemned by the masters of theology at Rome for arguing that it was more reasonable to believe that he was saved!—*Apol.* vii. 199. Since the seventh century Popes at their consecration abjured his errors, and said that he, Didymus, and Evagrius were "*aeternae condemnationi submissi.*" Diurn. *R. Pontif.*, p. 312.

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Christ's sake, not only of his father, but even of all his means of living, he made such advance between the straits of holy poverty that he was often tormented (it is said) for the name of Christ. . . So profound, so keen, so polished was his power of intellect that he far and much surpassed almost all; such was the splendour of his learning, and of all erudition, that there were few parts of sacred philosophy, and scarce any perhaps of human philosophy, which he did not attain. . . . Why should I speak of his eloquence? It was like flowing honey. It rendered the abstruse clear, and the difficult most easy. But perhaps he merely argued? Nay, no Father ever appealed more frequently to Scripture. Perhaps he wrote but little? No one ever wrote more. Perhaps he was not fortunate in his pupils? No man was ever more fortunate. Innumerable teachers, innumerable priests, confessors, martyrs, arose from his bosom. And who can tell what admiration, what glory, what favour he enjoyed among all? What man with anything like real devotion did not fly to his teaching from all parts of the world? What Christian did not venerate him as a prophet, what philosopher as a master? Even imperial princes venerated him. Porphyry himself, when a youth, sailed to Alexandria solely to see him in his old age, and recognised in him one who had climbed the very citadel of science. The day would fail me before I could tell of all his greatness, or even touch on a part of it."[1]

It is said that when he was driven from Alexandria he was invited to preach at Jerusalem, and, rising before the congregation, gave out as his text Psalm l. 16, 17—"But unto the wicked saith God, Why dost thou take My covenant in thy mouth, seeing that thou hatest to be reformed, and hast cast My words

[1] Vincent. Lirinensis, *adv. Haer*, xxiii. p. 351. (I have compressed his remarks.)

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behind thee?" And then, laying down the Book, burst into such a storm of tears and sobs that he could not proceed, while his congregation wept with him. The discourse which he is said to have delivered on this occasion, called "Origen's Complaint," is spurious, and the whole story may have been invented to prop up the brutal and foolish story first recorded by Epiphanius. But if this sad incident at Jerusalem was true, nothing but the most wooden incapacity can mistake its true significance. It only furnishes a fresh instance of the humility for which Origen was pre-eminent. The confessions of the holiest are ever the deepest and most sincere. A man like Origen might weep for faults which a Demetrius or a Theophilus might almost have regarded as virtues; and if he thus wept, the tears may have been wrung from him by the malice of others, not by the reproaches of his own sensitive and tender conscience.

> "Blush, Calumny, and write upon his tomb,
> If honest eulogy will leave thee room,
> Thy deep repentance of thy thousand lies,
> Which, aimed at him, have pierced the offended skies;
> And say, 'Blot out my sin, confessed, deplored,
> Against Thine image in Thy saint, O Lord!'"

I know but one life since the Christian era which ought so deeply to stir the compassion of repentant mankind as that of Origen. It is that of another, whose genius shone like a beacon light over the centuries that succeeded him—Roger Bacon. He, too, for the gifts of genius and the trials of lifelong devotion, reaped only the base and cruel ingratitude of the race which he had striven to ennoble and to serve.

But it is now time for us to mark when it was that the execrations first uttered by the wicked malignity of Demetrius began to break out generally against him; and to mark also who were his enemies and who were his friends.

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Let us begin with his enemies. Who were those who, after his death, martyred the martyr afresh with a yet more cruel and more enduring martyrdom?

DEMETRIUS was his enemy. Of Demetrius and his creatures I have said enough. They have for centuries sunk into oblivion. No good word nor deed of theirs survives. Their evil manners live in brass; and some of them have left no trace of any virtues which could be even written in water. Their very names are unknown, nor would they have been so much as heard of but for their connexion with the great man whose life they embittered. They enjoy that most ignoble of all forms of earthly immortality, —the infamy of being remembered as the persecutors of a man transcendently greater and better than themselves.

MARCELLUS OF ANCYRA was his enemy.[1] Like many over-eager assailants of real or supposed heretics, he was himself deposed for heresy by a Constantinopolitan synod in A.D. 336, and again at Sirmium in A.D. 351. His pupil Photinus openly professed the Sabellianism with which Marcellus was charged. Thus the first systematic attack on the orthodoxy of Origen as regards the Nicene faith came from one who was condemned as a heretic.

EPIPHANIUS, who died a hundred and fifty years after him (A D. 403), was his determined enemy. He was a man of some learning and some piety, but the very type of a narrow bigot. He too, like many who have been conspicuous for their zeal in trying to fasten the charge of heresy on those who deviate from their own Shibboleths, himself trembled on the verge of heresy. He threw the diocese of John, Bishop of Jerusalem, into turmoil and sedition by his meddlesome encroachments, and when almost in his dotage he was entangled in the schemes of the unscrupulous Theophilus of Alexandria, and died on his return

[1] Ap. Euseb. *c. Marcell.* i. 23.

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from a wrongheaded and futile attempt to intimidate and to depose St. Chrysostom.

THEOPHILUS OF ALEXANDRIA, one of the most disgraceful characters in ecclesiastical history, was his chief enemy. He died A.D. 412, and was known to his contemporaries as "the Trimmer" and "the Turncoat." He was at first an avowed Origenist,[1] and argued against the Anthropomorphites from the works of Origen. From motives of policy he turned round and persecuted the Origenists.[2] He hated St. Chrysostom also, because he had failed to prevent the saint's election to the see of Constantinople. To Theophilus was due the first deposition and banishment of that great man. When the people of Constantinople insisted on the recall of their good bishop the turbulent intriguer had to make his escape secretly by night.

METHODIUS OF OLYMPUS wrote a book against Origen; but he also wrote much in his praise, and it is at least a question whether the panegyrics were not later than the attacks.[3]

EUSTATHIUS OF ANTIOCH († circ. A.D. 337) wrote a book against him which only deals with minor points, and is of no importance.

APOLLINARIS THE HERESIARCH wrote against him, probably because Origen was an orthodox defender of the faith respecting the nature of Christ.[4]

[1] It is a most instructive and important fact, that *originally the name "Origenist" had no connexion with eschatology at all*, but meant those who held the truth that "God is a Spirit without body, parts, or passions," against ignorant Anthropomorphites. See Sozomen, *H. E.* viii. 11, 12; Nicephorus, *H. E.* xiii. 10.

[2] When charged with studying Origen after he had condemned him, he said that "Origen's books were like a garden; he selected the flowers, avoiding the thorns." Socr. *H. E.* vi. 17.

[3] Socrates, *H. E.* vi. 31, says that the praises of Origen were "*by way of palinode*" to the previous censures, and Eusebius does not contradict this. See Valesius' notes to Socrates, p. 80.

[4] Socrates, in his remarkable chapter in defence of Origen (*H. E.* vi. 13), calls these four men φιλολοίδοροι, and "a four-horse chariot of detractors, going in different directions."

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Certainly of some of these,—and especially of Theodore of Alexandria and the Emperor Justinian and the heretic Apollinaris,—it may well be said that as far as their characters are concerned their blame was an honour, and their praise would have been a reproach.

Now who were they who first called him heretic? Not apparently even the basest and most envenomed of his contemporaries.[1] They condemned him for acts perfectly lawful and not without precedent, which they regarded as ecclesiastical irregularities: for his preaching as a layman before bishops; for his being ordained, in spite of his physical condition, by the bishops of another province; for a vile story, supported by little or no evidence, which attributed to him (to him the martyr from boyhood!) the crime of apostasy. Books published against his will—books garbled by the crime of interpolators—misrepresentations of his views alike by his friends and his enemies[2]—passages which he merely formulated for the purpose of speculative discussion[3]—were used to excite or to increase the odium which Demetrius had first stirred up. But so far from being excommunicated as a heretic he was "honourably entertained, wherever he came, by the wiser and more moderate party of the Church."[4] His so-called "excommunication," even if it was not (as some think) withdrawn, was not only despised as invalid by a large number of bishops, but was even treated as nugatory in Alexandria itself.

Before his death Origen received a loving letter on martyrdom from his own patriarch Dionysius, who carried his views even to the patriarchal throne; he died amid the universal veneration of the Churches

[1] This is clear from the silence of Theophilus, Epiphanius, &c.

[2] Orig. *Hom.* xxv. *in Luc.* This remarkable passage may be found quoted on the title-page of *Eternal Hope.*

[3] ὡς ζητῶν καὶ γυμνάζων.—ATHANAS. *Def. Nic.* vi. § 27.

[4] Cave, *Lives of Fathers*, i. 224.

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in which he had chiefly laboured, and for centuries afterwards they still pointed to his honoured tomb at Tyre as to a martyr's resting-place.[1]

And whereas his opinions were never branded, nor his name anathematised till long after his death, this is how the very greatest, holiest, noblest, and most orthodox of his immediate contemporaries and successors speak of him for two centuries. Even as late as a century and a half after his death, Origen was still "*held in great glory in all the world.*"[2]

ST. GREGORY THAUMATURGUS, his friend and pupil, Bishop of Neocaesarea, one of the saintliest of the saints of his day, and one who enjoyed the highest honour and estimation among his contemporaries, wrote the panegyric of him which abounds in the warmest praises. Could the holiest and most respected bishop of his day have pronounced a glowing eulogy on an excommunicated heretic? Could he have called him—as he does—a man of almost divine endowments? Could he have expressly thanked his guardian angel for having brought him under the influence of Origen?[3]

PAMPHILUS, martyred in A.D. 309, eminent as a biblical scholar and large-hearted thinker, and founder of the public library and theological school of Caesarea, was an ardent admirer of Origen, and wrote his "Apology for Origen" in five books, the completion of which was only prevented by his martyrdom in the Diocletian persecution.[4] He spoke of him as

[1] William of Tyre, *Hist. Sacr.* xiii.

[2] Niceph. *H. E.* xi. 17.

[3] The panegyric of Origen by St. Gregory is printed in the fourth volume of De la Rue's edition. I select from it this passage:—*περὶ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς διανοοῦμαί τι λέγειν φαινομένου μὲν καὶ δοκοῦντος ἀνθρώπου, τὸ δὲ πολὺ τῆς ἕξεως τοῖς καθορᾶν δυναμένοις, ἀπεσκευασμένου ἤδη μείζονι παρασκευῇ μετ' ἀναστάσεως πρὸς τὸ θεῖον.*

[4] Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 53. Rufinus, in A.D. 397, wrote an incorrect Latin version of the first book, which is still extant (it is printed in the Appendix to vol. iv. of De la Rue's edition of Origen), and Rufinus attributes it to Pamphilus alone.

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having been "for many years a master of the Church." An anonymous Latin writer says that Pamphilus and Eusebius quoted many testimonies of the primitive Fathers in favour of Origen's views as to prae-existence and restitution.[1] The loss of this Apology is an irreparable loss to the Christian world.

ST. ATHANASIUS, "the father of orthodoxy," the Patriarch of the very city in which Origen had laboured, who was so uncompromising an enemy of every opinion which could be supposed to lead (as those of Origen are now asserted to do) to Arianism, —so far from condemning him, speaks of him as we have seen twice with loving epithets, made large use of his works, and once expressly quotes his authority for the true doctrine respecting the Eternal and con-substantial Son.[2] If the Arians ever quoted or misquoted him on their side, I prefer the testimony of St. Athanasius, and of many other saints to theirs.

ST. DIONYSIUS, PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA, surnamed the Great, was his pupil and friend, and wrote him a letter on martyrdom, full of praises, shortly before his death.[3] This proves that the persecution of him had been almost exclusively the work of Demetrius.[4]

ST. BASIL THE GREAT, Patriarch of Antioch, one of the foremost Churchmen of his day, drew up a Chrestomathy from the writings of Origen (calling it ἡ φιλοκαλία, or "love of the beautiful") in conjunction with St. Gregory of Nazianzus. It was drawn up "with a view to the diffusion of Origen's spiritual ideas, and

[1] "Multis praecedentibus Patrum testimoniis usus est pro praedictis erroribus."

[2] In the face of this fact it seems marvellous that Origen should have been ever called an Arian. Jerome says, "He everywhere acknowledged the co-eternity of the Son with the Father." Stephen Gobar (*ap.* Phot.)

[3] περὶ μαρτυρίας πρὸς τὸν Ὠριγένην. Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 46; Stephen Gobar, *ap.* Phot. *Cod.* 232.

[4] Photius, *Cod.* 117. See Guerike, *De Schol. Alex.* p. 67: "Origeni ejusque dogmatis valde favisse dicitur."

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particularly of his principles of interpretation." In it these two great Fathers refuted the Arians out of the writings of Origen.[1]

ST. GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS not only loved and admired his writings, but gave unmistakable proofs of favourable judgment respecting his hopes of the final restoration. He called him "a lover of the beautiful" (*philokalon*), and "the whetstone of us all"; and he spoke of the *Philokalia* as containing "extracts useful for the learned."

DIDYMUS THE BLIND, OF ALEXANDRIA, "a prodigy of science," adopted Origen's whole system, except where any points had been expressly condemned, and esteemed him so highly and defended him so warmly as to have been charged with adopting his errors.[2] The testimony of these great Alexandrians in his favour shows how little was thought of Demetrius and his alleged excommunication.

PIERIUS OF ALEXANDRIA was called in compliment "the young Origen" by the Christians of Alexandria, who could not therefore have looked on his name with disfavour.[3]

ST. HILARY OF POICTIERS closely imitated Origen in his work on the Psalms, and translated into Latin much of his commentary on Job.[4] He followed Origen in many respects,[5] and especially as to the probatory fire.[6] There is no accounting for the vagaries of literary custom, but to us it does not seem very creditable to St. Jerome, St. Hilary, and

[1] Niceph. *H. E.* xi. 17.

[2] Socrates, *H. E.* iv. 25. "Origenis apertissimus propugnator."—BARONIUS, *Ann. a.d.* 347. Even Doucin says that the Doctors of this age regarded Origen's books as "une source inépuisible de lumières."

[3] Phot. *Cod.* 119; Jer. *Cat. Virr. Illustr.* 76; Photius says, ἦν γὰρ τότε ἐν τοῖς ἀξιολογωτάτοις.

[4] Jer. *Cat. Virr. Illustr.* c. 76; Guerike, p. 75.

[5] See the Benedictine Preface to his works, *n.* 29.

[6] In Matt. ii. § 4; in Ps. cxviii. iii. § 5, 12.

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other Fathers, that they should have "robbed poor Origen without any mercy, and yet scarcely do him the honour so much as to name him."[1]

JOHN OF JERUSALEM,—a holy and humble bishop who presided at the synod of Diospolis, A.D. 415,—in opposition to the wild attacks of Epiphanius, openly avowed himself a reader of Origen, and refused in any way to sanction the attacks upon his asserted errors. St. Jerome charged him with holding eight alleged errors of Origen.[2]

ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA, though a great and independent theologian, was deeply influenced by Origen, and embraced more openly than any other his views of Universalism. He calls him "the most illustrious master of Christian philosophy who had lived up till those days."

EUSEBIUS OF VERCELLAE is expressly ranked by St. Jerome among Origen's admirers and imitators.

EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA (died *circ.* 340) added the sixth book to the *Apology for Origen*, begun by the martyr Pamphilus. He says that it was undertaken because of the detraction against Origen,[3] and was addressed to Patermuthius and others who were condemned to the mines of Palestine.[4]

TITUS, BISHOP OF BOSTIA, spoke of him with honour.

ST. FIRMILIAN, Bishop of the Cappadocian Caesarea, one of the most eminent and respected of the Asiatic bishops, was his special friend, and received him for some time after his banishment from Alexandria.[5]

ST. VICTORINUS, Bishop of Pettau in Styria, saint

[1] Daillé, *De Usu Patrum*, cap. vi.

[2] See Jer. *Ep. in Joannem*, 23.

[3] φιλαιτίων ἕνεκα. Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 53. Probably one of these detractors was Methodius of Olympus, whose name Eusebius designedly passes over in his history, just as Jerome takes no notice of Rufinus in his catalogue of illustrious men.

[4] Photius, *Cod.* 118. [5] Euseb. *H. E.* vi. 27.

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and martyr, borrowed largely from Origen, and translated some of his works freely into Latin.[1]

ST. AMBROSE has filled many of his books, especially the *Hexaemeron* and his *Commentary on St. Luke*, with what he learned from him, and he speaks of him as one of the greatest of Scriptural interpreters.[2] In his book on Abraham he calls him by the affectionate title of "*Origenes noster*."[3]

RUFINUS, the celebrated presbyter of Aquileia (died 410), made it his express object to make Origen favourably known in the West.

ST. JEROME, though he was dragged by his own passionate vanity, and by his relations with Theophilus, into violent antagonism against Origen, yet very largely, and often without acknowledgment, appropriates his teachings.[4] He calls him "that immortal intellect." Even in his tract against him he speaks of him with much tenderness and admiration, and says, "Let us not imitate his faults whose virtues we cannot reach." "This only I say, that I would be willing to have his knowledge of Scripture, even if coupled with the hatred which attaches to his name, caring nothing for mere shadows and bugbears whose nature it is to terrify infants, and to babble in dusky places."[5] "He was," said St. Jerome, "a great man from his infancy, and the true son of a martyr"[6]; "the greatest master of the Church after the Apostles."[7]

[1] Jer. *Ep.* lxv. 2.

[2] See Ambrose, in Ps. viii. 28; *Ep.* 43 (Tillemont, iii. 277).

[3] Ambrose, *De Abraham.* ii.

[4] When taxed with this, he says that he glories in the accusation of imitating one "quem cunctis prudentibus et vobis placere non dubito."—*Prolog. in Mic.* ii. See too *Prol. in Ezech.*

[5] Jer. *in Til.* iii. "Hoc unum dico, vellem cum invidia nominis ejus habere etiam scientiam scripturarum," &c.—*Trad. Hebr.* "Quod si quis Judas Zelotes opposuerit nobis errores ejus . . . non imitemur ejus vitia cujus virtutes non possumus sequi."—*Ep. ad. Pammach.* lxv. 3.

[6] *Ep.* lxix. 3.

[7] *Praef. in Quaest. in Gen.* Rufinus afterwards cast this passage in St. Jerome's teeth.—*Invectiv. II. in Hieron.*

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ST. AUGUSTINE, so far from speaking of him as "the insane and impious Origen," while charging him with errors, calls him "*ille vir tantus*."[1] And this is the more remarkable because there are no two men whose characteristics are more sharply contrasted than those of Origen and Augustine. Augustine was a literalist, to whom even the descriptions of the Apocalypse are scarcely symbols: Origen a transcendentalist, who allegorises even historic narratives. The centre of Origen's system was God and Hope: the centre of Augustine's was Punishment and Sin. Origen yearns for a final unity: Augustine almost exultingly acquiesces in a frightful and abiding dualism. Origen can scarcely bear the thought that even the devil should be unsaved: Augustine, like so many modern writers, is undisturbed in contemplating the wide sentence of an endless doom.[2]

PALLADIUS, Bishop of Helenopolis, supported the monks who had embraced the views of Origen.[3]

ISIDORE OF JERUSALEM was a warm admirer and supporter of the views of Origen.[4]

SEDULIUS, in the preface to his *Carmen Paschale*, calls him *peritissimum divinae legis*, and speaks of his triple series of works on the books of Scripture,—Continuous Commentaries, and briefer Scholia for the learned, and Homilies addressed to the multitude.

Many of the monks and hermits who were most eminent in piety—such, for instance, as EVAGRIUS of Pontus—were followers of Origen.[5]

From Origen's days to those of St. Chrysostom there is not a single eminent Scriptural commentator who has not made large use of his writings, and who has not taken from him the best that he has to teach.[6]

[1] Augustine, *Ep. ad Hieron.* 40.
[2] For a sketch of the two, see Canon Westcott in *Contemp. Rev.* xxxv. 500.
[3] Dial. in *Opp. Chrysost.* xiii. ed. Montfaucon.
[4] See Neander, iv. 476, *E Tr.* [5] Epiphan. *Haer.* lxiv. 2-4.
[6] See *Tillemont*, iii. p. 266 (Orig. aet. 37).

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Even in the fourth century those who wrote apologies for Origen were men of the highest repute.[1] SOCRATES relates that when the condemnation of Origen's writings was being most furiously driven on by Theophilus and Epiphanius, a good Scythian bishop named THEOTIMUS OF TOMI plainly told Epiphanius that he for his part would never so much dishonour a person so venerable for his piety and antiquity, nor durst he condemn what their ancestors never rejected, especially when there were no ill and mischievous doctrines in Origen's books; then withal he pulled out a book of Origen's which he showed before the whole convention to contain expositions agreeable to the articles of the Church.[2] Socrates has these very strong remarks: "Men of slender ability (εὐτελεῖς), who are unable to come to the light by their own fame, wished to gain distinction by blaming their betters. . . . . The accusations of such men contribute, I maintain, to establish Origen's reputation. . . . . And they who revile Origen forget that they thereby calumniate Athanasius, who praised him."[3]

SOZOMEN also tells with approval the story about Theotimus of Tomi, whom he warmly eulogises; and in his account of the machinations stirred up against Origen, he speaks with uncompromising condemnation of Theophilus of Alexandria.[4]

HAYMO, Bishop of Halberstadt, after expressing a doubt whether Origen's opinions were rightly represented, and were really his, adds—"And if, as some would have it, they were his own sentiments, we ought rather to deal compassionately with so

[1] ἀξιολογώτατοι, Phot. *Cod.* 118. [2] Socrates, *H. E.* vi. 12.

[3] Socrates speaks most honourably of Origen in many places, *H. E.* iii. 7, vi. 12, vii. 6 (where he speaks of his orthodoxy); ii. 35 (where he calls Actius ὀλιγομαθής, for depreciating Origen and Dioscurus, ἄνδρας πάσης σοφίας ἐπιστήμονας). See too vi. 9, 10, 12, 17, where Theophilus of Alexandria is painted in the darkest colours.

[4] Sozomen, *H. E.* viii. 11-14, vii. 26.

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learned a man who has conveyed so vast a treasure of learning to us. What faults there are in his writings, those orthodox and useful things which they contain are abundantly sufficient to overbalance."[1]

While such men spoke of him for centuries in warm terms of admiration we need be very little disturbed if "the wonderful and labour-loving" Father of St. Athanasius becomes the "heretic" and "schismatic" and "anathema" and "most unholy" of such persons as Theophilus of Alexandria and the Pseudo-Caesarius.

In modern times also some of the best and greatest theological writers have been most conspicuous for the honour which they paid to the name of Origen. In spite of anathemas, he rose to new fame with reviving freedom and reviving knowledge. "I have read," writes ERASMUS to Colet, "a great part of the works of Origen, and under his training I think that I have made good progress; for he opens, so to speak, the fountains of theology, and indicates the methods of the science." HUET, Bishop of Avranches, devoted years of loving labour to his honour. Dr. CAVE and BISHOP RUST speak of him with glowing enthusiasm. BARONIUS says that it was "by a sort of divine and heavenly providence that his mother saved him from martyrdom *ad maximam plurimorum utilitatem*."[2] SCHRÖCKH calls him "the greatest man that the ancient Church had."[3] TILLEMONT abounds in his praises. PICUS OF MIRANDOLA, GENEBRARD, HALLOIX, on various grounds, maintained the purity of his faith. MOSHEIM says that "he possessed every excellence that can adorn the Christian character." BAYLE, who calls him one of the rarest geniuses in the primitive Church, speaks of his admirable purity,

[1] Haymo, *Breviar. H. E.* vi. 13 (quoted by Cave, *Prim. Fathers*, i. 238).

[2] Baronius, *Ann.* A.D. 204.

[3] Schröckh, iv. 27, 39, xviii. 40.

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his ardent zeal for the Gospel, his great, beautiful, and lofty spirit. DOUCIN, so strong an opponent of his views, yet admits that his "heresies" originated in a desire to convert philosophers, and to shield Christian truth from Pagan insult. BISHOP BUTLER found in one single pregnant sentence of his most anathematised and "heretical" book—the *De Principiis*—which he quotes on the title-page of his *Analogy*, the acknowledged germ of the profoundest modern defence of revealed religion. "I had rather be with Origen," said PROF. MAURICE, "wherever he is, than with Justinian and Theodora wherever they are." "I love the name of Origen," says CARDINAL NEWMAN; "I will not listen to the notion that so great a soul was lost."[1] CANON WESTCOTT says—"His whole life, from first to last, was fashioned on the same type. It was, according to his own grand ideal, 'one unbroken prayer' (*μία προσευχὴ συνεχομένη*), one ceaseless effort after close fellowship with the Unseen and the Eternal. No distractions diverted him from the pursuit of divine wisdom. No persecution checked for more than the briefest space the energy of his efforts. He endured a double martyrdom: perils and sufferings from the heathen, reproaches and wrongs from Christians; and the retrospect of what he had borne only stirred within him a humbler sense of his shortcomings."

It is not in the writings of such men as these, whether ancient or modern, but only of men much less eminent and infinitely more fanatical and uncharitable, that we read such base language as that about "casting out to destruction the insane Origen and all his boastful dreams, and his writings full of various ungodliness," or "subjecting to eternal condemnation Origen and his impure disciples and followers, Didymus and Evagrius." Those who thus "sate in the high places and cursed the saints of

[1] See Newman's *Hist. of the Arians*, p. 42, where he mentions Origen's "indefatigable zeal and ready services in the confutation of heretics."

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God" can only be partly excused on the grounds of ignorance, and the false notion that such language could be defended by the supposed authority of the Fifth Oecumenical Council. They probably knew little or nothing of those whose redeemed souls they thus ignorantly cursed. The arm of an Origen is not to be measured by the finger of a Sophronius. "Many elephants," says the Bengali proverb, "cannot wade the river; the mosquito says it is only knee deep."

But it may be asked, if such were the sentiments of these great and good men towards him—if the reputation which he won in every branch of his labours, "however great, falls below the truth"—how is it that he was condemned by the Church? How far he was condemned, and why, and whether he was condemned on valid grounds, and what sort of weight is to be attached to the views of those who, centuries after he had gone to God, branded the great and holy man as a heretic, we shall see in the next section. Meanwhile let us bear in mind these facts:—

1. A dull writer, a man without imagination and without genius, and with no gift for speculative inquiry, has little danger of leaving the groove of conventional and contemporary opinions. Any one who repeats old shibboleths in their old senses, and does not even care to say *sumpsimus* if he has been accustomed to say *mumpsimus*, should hesitate to condemn a man whose mind was so active, so subtle, so far-flashing as that of Origen. There is scarcely a single writer of genius—especially if he have been also a writer of splendid originality—who has not been a mark for thousands of hostile arrows, and it would be strange indeed if there were no joints in human armour through which one or other of those arrows could find its way.

2. A great writer—from his very insight and versatility—from the necessity which he feels for looking

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at truth from all sides,—from the impossibility which exists for him of preventing the full river of his intellect from overflowing the straight-dug ditches of human system,—will be specially liable to misrepresentation. It is not the way of such writers when they lay down a general proposition carefully to guard themselves from being supposed to exclude the contradictory. They do not care, as "safe men" do, "to steer through the channel of No-meaning between the Scylla and Charybdis of Aye and No." They will inevitably present truth, now from one, now from another, point of view. They will be peculiarly liable to those small attacks which rely for victory on the exhibition of supposed "inconsistencies," and on the quips and quirks of a petty verbal criticism such as they would themselves disdain.

3. And still more will this be the case when, like Origen, they are voluminous writers; when writings have been blazoned abroad which they only intended for private circulation[1]; when they are condemned long after their death, as Origen was, and have never been heard in their own defence; when no distinction is drawn between their mere tentative suggestions—what may be almost called their speculative soliloquies[2]—and their defined opinions;—above all, when their books, if not actually interpolated, have been most grossly misinterpreted. Even in the publicity of modern life it is, I find, quite possible for an

[1] This was done, as Origen complained, by the misguided zeal of his friend Ambrosius. St. Jerome, in his letter to Pammachius (*De Errore Origenis*), says that in his letter to Fabian, Bishop of Rome, he had complained of Ambrosius, "quod secrete edita in publicum protulerit." Besides these, gross forgeries were circulated under his name, among others by a certain Eassus (Rufinus).

[2] It was very early maintained that Origen had "only thrown out some speculations, γυμνασίας χάριν, by way of exercitation, not positively or dogmatically." (Photius, *Cod.* 296.) St. Athanasius urged this plea on behalf of some of his views, and said that others—among which I have little doubt that he would have classed Origen's views respecting eschatology—were on points left undecided by Scripture and by the Church.

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author to be incessantly charged with opinions which, so far from having expressed, he has openly, deliberately, and repeatedly repudiated.

Now every one of these remarks applies to Origen. If Bishop Jeremy Taylor was alarmed when "a committee of Scotch spiders was appointed to see if they could gather or make poison out of his books, and had drawn some little things into a paper,"[1] Origen, even in his lifetime, may have been very obnoxious to attack if every dubious sentiment or mistaken expression scattered up and down in 6,000 books or pamphlets was marshalled in array against him. Yet it is on such evidence that "almost all ages, without any reverence to his parts, learning, piety, and the judgment of the wisest and best of the times he lived in, have, without any mercy, pronounced him heretic, and his sentiments and speculations rash, absurd, pernicious, blasphemous, and, indeed, what not."[2] Had not the apologies written for him by Pamphilus the Martyr, and Eusebius, and Dionysius, and others,[3] perished, "Origen's cause might appear with a better face, seeing we have now nothing but his notions dressed up and glossed by his professed enemies, and many things ascribed to him which he never owned, but which were coined by his pretended followers."[4] Primasius says that there were three Origens.[5] One of them was a wretch known as "the Impure," who taught the most immoral doctrines. Besides the partial interpolation of the works of Origen which began, as he himself complains, in his own lifetime, it is by no means impossible that his opinions might have got mixed up in the minds of some with those of writers who bore the same name, and so the hatred against him might

[1] Letter to Ormond, *Life*, p. ci.

[2] Cave, *l. c.* p. 235. The learned and pious author refers with great approval to the defence of Origen by Bishop Rust in the *Phœnix*, vol. i.

[3] Mentioned by Photius, *Cod.* cxviii.

[4] Cave, *l. c.*

[5] Primasius (?) *de Haer.* i. 22.

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have been increased "as in a globe of fire, by intolerable reflexions." Fierce, narrow, and ungrateful as many of his fellow-Churchmen showed themselves to be, Origen always maintained a humble and submissive spirit; and "a man of a disposition so Catholic may," as Tillemont says, "hold some heretical opinions because he is human and fallible, but he cannot be a heretic, because he is neither proud nor attached to his error." [1]

4. Again, Origen was a great and profound philosopher. Scarcely one of all the Fathers—and certainly not Augustine—was capable of fathoming the depths or grasping the breadth of his system. Sound as he seems to have been—even in the judgment of Athanasius—as regards the essential truths of Christianity, fragments, perhaps spurious, certainly distorted, often purely tentative, were torn out of his writings and judged in false perspective by men incapable of judging them in due relation to the system of which they were but isolated parts.

5. Lastly, the attacks upon Origen at the close of the fifth century synchronise with a great intellectual revolution. The learned Alexandrian and Asiatic Fathers, men like St. Clemens and Origen, and St. Basil and the Gregories, were men who were trained to philosophic thought. They belong to what has been called "the Age of Doctors." They were familiar with the works of the great Greek thinkers, and were deeply imbued with the Platonic idealism. By the fifth century a very different school had sprung up. The leaders of Church thought had been gradually influenced by Aristotelian realism, and the enemies of Origen were actuated not only

[1] iii. p. 117, ed. 1699. Two things are clear, (i) that Origen's so-called Arian tendencies are either a calumny or a mistake; (ii) that he considered his eschatological views, even in their widest latitude, to be strictly reconcilable with Catholic teaching. He distinctly says, in the Sixteenth Homily on St. Luke, that he desired to be faithful to the Church as a simple Christian.

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by personal antipathy to a teacher whose views were too large, too humanitarian, and too profound for their limited capacity and narrow training, but were also advocates of hierarchical supremacy, and devotees of rigid formulae.[1] They could not but look with a suspicion amounting to hatred upon a teacher who compelled men to face the whole question of the position and destiny of mankind, and whose searching views rendered it impossible for them to be content with the passive acceptance of crystallised dogmas for no better reason than that they were enforced by the anathemas of despotic authority.

And so it came about that—

> "Men whose life, learning, faith, and pure intent,
> Would have been held in high esteem by Paul,
> Must now be called and printed heretics,
> By shallow Edwards and Scotch What-d'ye-call."

[1] See Canon Westcott, in *Contemp. Rev.* xxxv 337.

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CHAPTER XI.

ORIGEN AND CHURCH COUNCILS.

"Nos quid Scriptura doceat novimus; conciliorum decreta si cum Scriptura non consentiunt merito rejicimus."—DIETELMAIR, *De Decensu Christi ad Inferos*, p. 22.

THAT Origen held the ultimate restitution of all mankind is freely admitted.

His view—which was only a part of one comprehensive philosophy—was as follows:—God's purpose in creation was good, and it is His will to restore His universe to its pristine order. Hence, since we have all sinned, we must all, more or less, suffer beyond the grave. But our sufferings are only intended as means to win us back. Their sole end and aim is our amelioration. Hence they are not "endless," though they are called aeonian.[1] They may last for thousands of years, but they will terminate at last. After the intermediate state, after the burning of the world, after the rising of our heavenly bodies, will follow the condition of blessedness, which will be higher and lower in proportion to the purity of heart and knowledge of God to which we shall then have attained, and which will continue until we have reached our fulfilment. Such was the hope which Origen was led to entertain by his profound trust in God and his profound knowledge of

[1] ὀνομαζομένων αἰωνίων κολάσεων.—*C. Cels.* iii. 499.

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Scripture. But he ever humbly admitted that only a few dim glimpses into the future were vouchsafed to us, so that it is well not to speak too much, but to praise God in the silence of the spirit.[1]

Dr. Pusey, like Picus of Mirandola, Merlinus, Genebrardus, and others before him, has quoted other passages and expressions which seem to adopt the current views. The fact that such passages can be adduced from Origen's writings is alone an overwhelming answer to many previous pages of Dr. Pusey's book. It shows that a use of the common scriptural expressions, and particularly of the word *aionios*, did not necessarily involve an acceptance of what Origen, like other great Fathers, regarded as the misinterpretation to which those expressions were subjected. "Origen," said St. Jerome, "was not a fool. He cannot urge direct contradictories."[2] Such passages, as Petavius says, "either prove nothing whatever, or have no reference to mankind." As for the adjective *aionios* ("eternal"), which Origen applies to the fire of hell, it is nothing to the purpose. He might have called it so with reference to the devil; or have interpreted it in his own sense, since he always makes "eternal" mean "eternal in its own range," *i.e.* lasting until the Day of Judgment[3]; or again he might have said that the fire was "eternal," but that all who entered it were not doomed to remain therein for ever; or, once more, that though the penalty of "eternal fire" was incurred, it need not necessarily and in all instances be actually inflicted.

Origen, says Dr. Pusey, "laid down beforehand, as

[1] See Guerike, *De Schol. Alex.* ii. 162, and especially Redepenning, i. 183, ii. 447, where he refers to the numerous original passages.

[2] Jer. *Apol.* 2.

[3] See Petav. *De Aug.* iii. vi. § 12. "Atque nihil hoc genere defensionis levius est. . . Nam omnia fere loca quae a Merlino et Genebrardo ex Origene deprompta sunt, aut nihil efficiunt omnino aut ad homines minime referuntur, velut quod inferorum ignem aeternum vocat Origenes, nihil hoc est," &c.

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the rule of faith, that 'that only was to be believed as truth which is in no way out of harmony with the ecclesiastical and apostolic tradition.'"[1] That he did so is a strong proof that he was well aware that the doctrine of restitution was "in no way out of harmony with ecclesiastical and apostolic tradition."

But then—it is urged—Pamphilus, St. Jerome, and others defended Origen on the ground that many of his opinions were only put forth unsystematically, speculatively, as opinions, "lest they should seem altogether unconsidered." Dr. Pusey, after Wetstein, shows that he often uses the phrases "perhaps," "it seems to me," and similar expressions of uncertainty.[2] In this Origen shows his wisdom. The wisest teachers regarding the future are those who repudiate untenable dogmatism, not those who themselves dogmatise. He held his opinions as opinions,[3] and no one has a right to assert as being "of faith," matters that belong only to the range of probability, matters on which the Church has laid down no authoritative dogmas. Origen, in his doctrinal teaching, not only professed to be, but was—and was for centuries—regarded as a true son of the Church, of which he was also a most distinguished ornament, and he could not, therefore, have thought that he was transgressing any doctrinal teaching of the Church even when he went so far as to write that "he who is saved is saved through fire, that if, perchance, he has any alloy of lead in him, the fire may purge and melt it out, in order that *all* may be made pure gold."[4]

Now surely it is a simple question of history—a question capable of final decision one way or the

[1] *De Princip.* i. *Praef. n.* 2.

[2] "Quaesita tantum atque projecta ne penitus intractata viderentur." —JER. *Ep.* lix. *ad Avit.*

[3] "Certius tamen qualiter se habitura sit res scit solus Deus, et si qui Ejus per Christum et Spiritum Sanctum amici sunt."—ORIG. *De Princip.* I.

[4] Orig. Hom. vi. *in Exod.*

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other—whether the ancient Church has ever categorically condemned the doctrine of Universalism, as it is expressed in this sentence. No loudness of mere assertion that she has condemned it can have a feather's weight in the discussion if, in point of fact, she has not.

And I undertake to prove that she has not so condemned it.

I will ask the reader carefully to bear in mind that this is a mere question of literary evidence which in no way affects me, or anything which I have said on the subject.

It in no way affects me (i) because I have never been able to embrace the dogma of Universalism, and (ii) because the only Councils of which the Church of England in any way acknowledges the authority are the first four Oecumenical Councils. Now no one has even pretended to say that one word was uttered against Origen, or one syllable decided against universal restoration, much less against the milder hope which repudiates the encroachments of popular religionism, at the Councils of Nice (A. D. 325), Constantinople (A. D. 381), Ephesus (A. D. 431), or Chalcedon (A. D. 451).

It would indeed be strange if such had been the case. In the Council of Nice a prominent part was taken by Eusebius of Caesarea, the apologist of Origen; in the Council of Constantinople by St. Gregory of Nazianzus and St. Gregory of Nyssa, who, on the subject of restitution, leaned—the one somewhat indirectly, the other quite openly—to his eschatological opinions. The Council of Ephesus referred to the writings of St. Gregory of Nyssa (full as they are of Universalism) as the great bulwark of the Church against heresy!

At each, then, of the first three Great Councils, and probably at the fourth also, men were present and were received with honour, and held reputations

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for unblemished orthodoxy—men of whom some were canonised saints, and were regarded as bulwarks of the true faith—who on the subject of the final restitution of mankind agreed with Origen. But apart from this, let every unbiassed reader observe the immense significance of the fact that Origen's views respecting Restorationism were perfectly well known, and were very widely shared even in the days of the Council of Nice. To St. Athanasius, for instance, as Patriarch of Alexandria, and as one who loved the name, quoted the writings, and admired the labours of Origen, his eschatological views were perfectly familiar, and it is certain that *as a whole* he did not approve of them; yet at no one of those Councils was the doctrine of endless punishment for *any* souls required as a matter of faith. Had the ancient Church regarded that doctrine as being so indisputable and so essential as many now suppose it to be, it is perfectly certain that they could not have been silent respecting it. The fact that the first four General Councils took no cognisance even of Universalism, though it was then widely prevalent, is an argument of overwhelming force in favour of those who maintain that even Universalism is *permissible as a hope* in the Christian Church, and that for nearly five centuries the Church never uttered respecting it any general and authoritative censure.

I have shown that in almost every age which has not fallen into "the deep slumber of decided opinions,"—in the earliest ages, in the middle ages, in the dawn of the Reformation, in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, merciful views have been maintained which go much farther than those Catholic opinions which I have advocated. And yet I do not know of a single instance in which those views have been declared to be untenable, or in which those who have held them—being in some instances eminent bishops, archbishops, and theologians of our own and other Reformed Churches—

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have had their positions attacked or even threatened in consequence.[1]

It will of course be understood that I am not making the truth of any doctrine depend on the decision of Councils. I am only using the silence of the first four General Councils as evidence respecting the views of the Catholic Church as to what were, and what were not, regarded as open questions. The Church of England has expressly refused to bind herself by the decisions of any Council. She says, briefly and emphatically, that General Councils may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. The First Article of Henry VIII. (1536) recognised the judgments of the first Four Councils against heresies, and in spite of the singularly contemptuous language about ecclesiastical gatherings used by the sainted president of the Second Oecumenical Council,[2] Cranmer in his *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum* said that "we reverently accept the first four great Oecumenical Synods."

But if we "reverently accept" the first four, we do

[1] It need hardly be said that Mr. Maurice's loss of his professorship at King's College (in spite of the strenuous efforts of Bishop Wilberforce) was not due to any act of the English Church, but to the private decision of an irresponsible corporation. No one dreamt of disputing his position as Chaplain at Lincoln's Inn. He was subsequently appointed incumbent of Vere Street Chapel, and welcomed with enthusiasm as a religious teacher in the Professorship at Cambridge, to which he was appointed by the Crown.

[2] In the document signed by Cranmer and many bishops in the name of Convocation in 1536, the following words of St. Gregory of Nazianzus are quoted: "I think this . . . that all assemblies of bishops should be eschewed; for I have seen a good result of no synod, but an increase rather than a solution of evils; for love of controversy and ambition overcometh reason (think not that I write maliciously)."—BURNET, *Hist. of the Reform.* app. iii. 5. Nor was this an isolated expression of his opinion penned in a passing fit of indignation. He repeats in verse what he has said in prose:—

> Οὐδέ τι που συνόδοισιν ὁμόθρονος ἔσσομ' ἐγωγε
> χηνῶν ἢ γεράνων ἄκριτα μαρναμένων·
> ἔνθ' ἔρις, ἔνθα μόθος τε, καὶ αἴσχεα κρυπτὰ πάροιθεν
> εἰς ἕνα δυσμενέων χῶρον ἀγειρόμενα.—*Carm.* x.

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not in any way profess to be bound by the decisions of any others. Whether, therefore, Origen's Universalism was condemned by the Fifth General Council or by any number of provincial synods, is a purely literary question; for we recognise no ground whatever on which the ecclesiastics of the sixth century could claim any clearer illumination than those of the nineteenth. But, nevertheless, I maintain that it was *not* so condemned.

Do not let the reader be misled by the assertion that "Origenism" was condemned, or that "Origen" was condemned. That proves absolutely nothing as to this particular opinion; for this opinion was notoriously separable from Origenism. It was not what was meant by "Origenism." It was widely held by those who opposed Origen in everything else. If any one wishes to know what "Origenism" was, he has only to read the crude mass of fantastic opinions attributed to him in the canons of the "Home Synod." He will see at once that Universalism is a question which is barely so much as grazed—and that only by one single disputable word—in all those canons put together. I do not see how any one who has studied the literature of this controversy can fail to admit that "Origenism" meant primarily and mainly certain heterodox views about the mystery of the Trinity. It was *these* which were originally the question, and not Origen's eschatology—"the things which Origen had" (as Jerome asserts) "impiously said about the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."[1] It was these asserted but unproved heresies which made Pachomius fling a volume of Origen into a river, and warn his monks against any study of his writings.[2]

[1] Jer. *Apol.* i.

[2] *Acta Sanctorum*, May 14. So far as I know, Pachomius (like Epiphanius) did not even allude to Origen's Restitutionism. The charge brought against Origen, &c., in the abjuration of the Popes is only that he adopted "Gentile fables" respecting God and all rational creatures. —Diurn. *R. Pont.* p. 312.

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The reader may easily convince himself of this important fact if he will read Doucin's *Histoire de l'Origenisme* (1700). In that book from beginning to end there is no discussion of Origen's eschatology, and barely so much as an allusion to it.

The question of Universalism, as a general and independent hope for mankind alone, has never, so far as I am aware, been so much as submitted to any ancient or general council whatever. In cases where it has in some distant degree come under notice, it has always been mixed up with a multitude of other views, such as pre-existence, cycles of probation, the salvability of devils, and the insecure bliss of the saved. St. Augustine indeed asserts—without offering a shadow of proof—that "both for this and for other things, and most of all for the unceasing alternations of bliss and misery, &c., the Church has with reason rejected him (*jure reprobavit Ecclesia*)." But what is the "this"? Not, as is often insinuated, the simple question of the ultimate salvation of all men, but for this Universalism together with the ultimate restoration of the fallen angels.[1] I am convinced that this addition to simple Universalism furnished the gravamen of the charge against Origen under this head.[2] I have shown already that as to simple Universalism St. Augustine uses language far more wavering and far less hostile than is generally

[1] This was a most undoubted part of Origen's system, and is always quoted by the ancients in connection with it. Jerome says that in one of his letters Origen repudiated as absurd the salvability of the devil (*in Ruf.* ii.). This I cannot understand. If he ever did so his opinion must have changed.

[2] Pascal clearly recognises this fact. He says that the writings of Origen were condemned by several councils, and even by the Fifth General Council, as "containing heresies, and among others that of the reconciliation of demons at the Day of Judgment."—*Provincial Letters*, xvii. (De Soyres' edition, p. 365). What was then prominent in the minds of those Fathers who opposed Origen is obvious (see Epiphan. *Ep. ad Joan. Hierosol.* § 3; Theophilus, *Paschal*, 12; Jer. *Ep.* lix. *ad Avitum*; *Ep.* lxi. *ad Pammach.*; *Ep.* lxxv. *ad. Vigilant.*; *adv. Pelag.* i. 9; *in Esaiam*, xiv. 20; xxvii. 11; *in Johan.* iii. 6).

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acknowledged. Origen rested his opinion on this subject upon a number of texts, every one of which he quotes. It was on his part a perfectly loyal deduction from the oracles of God.[1] If many of these are entirely beside the mark, the same is equally true of many of the texts urged on the other side. No one, I think, who is at all acquainted with patristic exegesis will deny that, on the only principles of interpretation which were then recognised, the Fathers would have found it all but impossible to deny the relevancy and cogency of the texts on which the hopes of Origen were based.

I do ask earnest attention to the fact that Epiphanius, who was the first to attach the name of "heretic" to the honoured name of Origen—a man in every respect his superior—does not mention his eschatology at all. Theophilus, eager as he was to injure Origen, does not say a word against his Restorationism as regards mankind, but only objects to the salvability of devils.[2] The same is true of St. Jerome,[3] and Sulpicius Severus.[4] Similarly in the remarks of Leo the Great,[5] in the *Life of St. Saba* by Cyril of Scythopolis, and even in Justinian's letter to the Home Synod, the prominent complaint is not against Origen's Universalism, but against his doctrine of the prae-existence of souls. Every fresh study of the original authorities only leaves on my mind a deeper impression that even in the fifth century Universalism *as regards mankind* was regarded as a perfectly tenable opinion.

But Dr. Pusey says Universalism was separately condemned at the Synod of Diospolis (A.D. 415).

[1] In different works Origen, in support of his eschatology, comments on Is. iv. 16; x. 17; xii. 1; xxiv. 22; xlvii. 14; Mic. vii. 9; Mal. iii. 3; Ps. xxx. 20; lxi. 2; cix. 1, 2; John x. 16; xvii. 21-23; Rom. xi. 32; 1 Cor. xv. 26, &c.

[2] Jer. *Opp.* i. 537 (ed. Vallars.), Mansi, *Concil.* iii. 971.

[3] Jer. *Ep.* xxxvi. (*ad Vigilantium*), and xxxviii. (*ad Pammachium*).

[4] Sulp. Sev. *Dial.* i. 6, 7. [5] Leo, *Ep.* 35.

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It would be a matter of very small consequence if it was; for of all synods—which is saying a great deal—this is in every respect one of the weakest and least authoritative.

The Synod of Diospolis was a mere meeting of fourteen country bishops at Lydda summoned to condemn Pelagius. There was not among them a single ecclesiastic with any great pretension to learning or eminence. Pelagius wrote in Latin, and the bishops only understood Greek. They were therefore unable to examine the writings which they were yet called upon to condemn. They were hoodwinked from first to last by the "astute heresiarch." The unfortunate synod was even itself suspected of Pelagianism, since it recognised Pelagius as a member of the Catholic Church. It is impossible to read the story of this gathering of provincial clerics without a smile. It is impossible not to see that Pelagius was laughing in his sleeve at the good fathers who were not a match for him either in acuteness or in technical theological knowledge. His secret contempt for the incapacity of his judges breaks out when he promises to anathematise the holders of certain views if he may anathematise them "as fools, not as heretics." St. Jerome unceremoniously called it a *synodus miserabilis*, and Neander says—very moderately—that those fourteen provincial bishops proceeded in an extremely superficial way.

However, such as it was, what took place as regards Origen in this "wretched synod," is simply this. Pelagius had taught "that in the Day of Judgment the wicked and sinners would not be spared; but would be burned up with eternal fires."[1] This was charged against him as a heresy. He simply replied that he meant it in the sense of Matt. xxv. 45, and that "if any one thought otherwise he was [*quoad hoc*, of

[1] "In die judicii iniquis et peccatoribus non esse parcendum; sed aeternis eos ignibus esse exurendos." See *supra*, p. 283.

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course] an Origenist." It is clear that much more must have passed; for a synod which could first entertain such a charge and then acquit the proposition of being heretical on such a defence, must have been incompetent indeed. But if Pelagius had tried, in his stern and gloomy doctrine, to represent as heretical and "Origenistic" the view of a "probatory fire"—of a punishment terminable for some, and even for the majority—"it is" (as Neander says) "doubtful whether the synod would have been so easily satisfied." Even the invidious and misleading word "Origenism" could not have frightened them out of these convictions. Nothing can show more decisively that the Church generally did believe in a terminable punishment for some, than the fact that Pelagius' words should have been brought before them as heretical. But if the authority of these fourteen accidental bishops—one of the very weakest and least influential synods which ever assembled—is to be taken as having the smallest importance as a condemnation of Origen in his heresies, then the same authority must be accepted as a rehabilitation of Pelagius in *his* heresies.

And this is to be described as an agreement of the East with the West in condemnation of Origen! We are to be overawed by the Synod of Diospolis, and to take no account of the fact that the two profoundest and most learned schools of Christian antiquity—the school of Alexandria and the school of Antioch—widely as they differed in other respects, yet agreed in holding wider hopes than are now held as regards the future of the lost!

For the condemnation of Origen in the East Dr. Pusey refers us to three other synods.

One is a synod at Alexandria, A.D. 401, consisting of Egyptian bishops, under the influence of Theophilus of Alexandria. In any case the opinion of such synods on dogmatic questions would be as indecisive

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as that of any diocesan synod in these days, especially if they were blindly following the lead of some one powerful bishop. But to say that it condemned "Origen" is to say nothing whatever as to the question now before us. The question which raged between Theophilus and the monks did not turn on Universalism at all, but was simply a question about Anthropomorphism (*i.e.* the question whether God was corporeal or spiritual), in which Origen was absolutely in the right, and Theophilus and his creatures hopelessly in the wrong.

Not a line exists to show that the synod condemned Origen's views about the future life. The same remark applies to the synods held by Epiphanius in Cyprus, and Anastasius in Rome.[1] The reader must be jealously on his guard against assertions that "Origenism" was condemned when they are meant to imply that the doctrine of man's final restoration was condemned. Restorationism, in every instance, was looked upon as a mere fractional element in a complex system of opinions with which it has not the least necessary connexion. And I repeat the remarkable fact that Epiphanius, though his narrow and bigoted literalism made him a tool in the hands of the bad Theophilus, *yet, in all his assaults on Origen, says not a syllable against, and does not so much as barely name, the Restorationist dogma ;* while even Jerome, another hot denouncer of Origen, approached to that dogma far more nearly than those who quote his authority in order to condemn it. Origen's general opinions were "fagoted together by some malicious or quarrelsome readers of his works" in a way which would naturally mislead the ignorant and unsuspecting; and by his Universalism, when it

[1] Anastasius seems to have known nothing whatever about Origen (*Ep.* i. *in Johan. Hierosol.* A.D. 401) until he was stirred up by a Roman lady named Marcella, one of the widows who lived in constant communication with Jerome, who on his part had been stirred up by Epiphanius and Theophilus.

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was alluded to at all, was meant a notion that the devils would be saved, and that the lost would after long periods be delivered to try their fortunes again in various regions of the world.

And Dr. Pusey is surely mistaken in supposing that these synods were effectual even against Origen's real errors. "No one," says Dr. Pusey, "any more uttered them. The Church had rest. No one maintained, however hesitatingly, what the Church had condemned." This style of confident assertion is, I venture to think, far too common among theologians, and in these sentences Dr. Pusey contradicts the most positive testimony of contemporary authorities. The "Church" had not in any true sense spoken; and thousands maintained, quite unhesitatingly, the doctrines which are asserted to have been condemned. If Dr. Pusey means that no one any longer held Restorationism, he is confuted at once by the testimonies of St. Augustine and St. Jerome that "plerique" and "quam plurimi" (*Enchir.* 112) held it. If he refers to other real or supposed errors of Origen, he contradicts the contemporary testimony of Sulpicius Severus, who says, "Whether it were an error, as I think, or a heresy as is thought (by others), it not only could not be repressed by many animadversions of priests, but it would never have been able to spread so far, had it not increased by controversy."[1] Writing on Eschatology, St. Jerome says, "Nor am I ignorant how wide a difference of opinion there is among men . . . about the promises respecting future things, how they ought to be received."[2] The certainty that these

[1] Sulp. Sev. *Dial.* i. 3. See too Isidore, iv. *Ep.* 163, &c.

[2] Jer. *Proaem. in lib.* xviii. *in Esaiam.* Gieseler says that (long after the date of these synods) "Origen's opinion as to the duration of future punishments was so general, even in the West, and among the opponents of Origen . . . that it had become entirely independent of his system."—*Eccl. Hist.* i. § 85. He refers to Jer. in Gal. v. 22; Eph. iv. 16; Ambrosiaster in Eph. iii. 10. Doucin admits that up to the middle of the fourth century Origen was regarded as a high authority

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opinions were held is, on Dr. Pusey's own premises, a decisive proof that (i) either they had never been condemned by the Church at all, or (ii) that any censure which had been passed was regarded as non-authoritative.

But before I leave these synods it may be worth while to glance at the circumstances in which they originated, and at the person who was their chief promoter.

The man who did more to blacken the name and memory of Origen, and to attach to him the stigma of heresy respecting the nature of Christ—heresy from the charge of which for two centuries the greatest Fathers of the Church had defended him, and which great and good men like St. Chrysostom entirely refused to endorse—was one of the worst prelates and one of the worst men who disgraced the early part of the fifth century. It was Theophilus of Alexandria.

This man began the unworthy career—which gained him from his contemporaries such names as "the Trimmer" and "the Turncoat," the "Money-mad" and "the Stone-worshipper"[1]—by being an avowed Origenist. His change of opinion, if change it was, was due, according to general testimony, to physical terror and to private malice. I can find no ancient or modern author who has a word to say in his defence. Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, and all the ancient authorities pronounce the most unfavourable verdict on his conduct and motives. Gibbon calls him "an active and ambitious prelate, who displayed the fruits of rapine in moments of ostentation," speaks of his "dissimulation and violence," and attributes his attacks on St. Chrysostom partly to jealousy of

on all matters of faith.—*Hist. de l'Origenisme*, p. 102. Elsewhere he uses these remarkable words, "Pourvu qu'on l'eût de son côté, on se croyait sûr d'avoir la vérité, tant son témoignage paroissoit alors décisif sur le premier et le plus profond des nos mystères," p. 2.

[1] ὁ ἀμφαλλάξ, ὁ κόθορνος (Palladius). The latter nickname, which was also given to Theramenes, means a buskin which fits either foot. Palladius (*ap.* Montfaucon), xiii. 20. ὁ χρυσομανὴς καὶ λιθολάτρις.—ST. ISIDORE OF PELUSIUM, i. p. 152.

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Constantinople, and partly to personal exasperation against St. Chrysostom.[1] Neander says that "little dependence could be placed on his principles, for worldly interests and passions had more power over him than principles and rational convictions." Bishop Rust calls him "proud, revengeful, covetous, crafty, and turbulent."[2] Gieseler stigmatises him as "ambitious and violent."[3]

When Epiphanius, a man who was too dull of intellect to understand Origen, had attacked his views—*not as to the future*, but respecting the spiritual nature of God—at Jerusalem, Theophilus, then an Origenist, appeared on the scene as a mediator, and on one occasion he publicly called Epiphanius an heresiarch.

At that time the Egyptian monks were divided into two parties. The Nitrian monks were Origenists, and one of their leaders was the venerable Isidore, who at that time had great influence over Theophilus. They were for the most part men of some intelligence and some culture. The Scetic monks, on the other hand, were mostly rude and uneducated peasants, and they hated Origen as the chief enemy of their "crass and sensuous method of apprehending divine things,"[4] which was known as Anthropomorphism. Their fleshly notions as to the divine essence and the image of God in man were simply due to ignorance; and in 399, Theophilus, in one of his Epiphany-programmes, made an inopportune attack upon them. This threw them into such fury that they rushed in savage crowds to Alexandria and threatened Theophilus with death. Thereupon, being a man "with whom prevarication and falsehood cost but little," he contrived to soothe them by the hypocritic words, "In you I behold the countenance of God,"[5] and yielded to their ignorant demand that he

[1] *Decline and Fall*, iii. 186, ed. Milman. [2] *The Phenix*, i.
[3] *Eccl. Hist.* i. p. 366. [4] Neander, iv. 472, 473.
[5] Sozomen, *H. E.* viii. 11.

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"should condemn the godless Origen,"—of whom he had hitherto been a recognised defender, and whose writings these Scetic monks had probably never read, and had not in any case the requisite culture to understand.

If that had been all, Theophilus would have been the last man to find any difficulty in repudiating an enforced assent. But two other events — both supremely discreditable to him—made him henceforth an avowed foe to the memory of Origen and to the doctrines which he himself had hitherto maintained.

i. One of these arose from pique. Among the Nitrian monks was Evagrius of Pontus, a hermit, a deacon, an ascetic writer of wide influence, a pupil of the two Saints, Macarius of Egypt and Macarius of Alexandria, and an ardent Origenist. But the leaders of these Origenist monks at this time were the four "tall brothers"—Dioscurus, Ammonius, Eusebius, and Euthymius. Forcing them against their will into the active service of the Church, Theophilus made Dioscurus Bishop of Hermopolis and two of his brothers "stewards" of his Church. A short experience filled these honest men with profound disgust for the greed and hypocrisy of the Patriarch, and they begged leave to return to their desert cells. Divining their real motive—which was that they might not defile their souls any longer by contact with his sins—Theophilus was filled with fury, and determined on revenge.

ii. This rage was enhanced by his quarrel with his former friend, the aged Isidore. Isidore, being superintendent of an almshouse at Alexandria, received from a wealthy widow a gift of a thousand gold pieces to buy clothes for poor Alexandrian women, but under the express condition of not mentioning it to the Patriarch, whose greed she feared. Theophilus discovered the secret, and, disguising his spleen under calumnies, procured the deposition and excommuni-

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cation of this old man of eighty, who fled for refuge to the Nitrian monks.[1]

Since both the "tall brothers" and Isidore were now under their protection, Theophilus began to attack them by sending among them Anthropomorphite monks, who charged them with holding "the blasphemous opinions of Origen," and by stirring up Jerome and Epiphanius against them. After getting the writings of Origen condemned by his plastic local bishops, he launched the Praefect of Egypt on the poor Eremites with an armed band; and not content with breaking up the holy and peaceful retreats in which for years they had lived with God, he pursued them by encyclical letters, "dictated by violent passion and malicious cunning,"[2] when they had fled for refuge to the care of St. Chrysostom.

On their arrival at Constantinople St. Chrysostom behaved to them with kindness, but with caution; and endeavoured to reconcile them with Theophilus. The monks, however, appealed to the Emperor Arcadius and Eudoxia, who appointed a synod, with Chrysostom as its president, to judge Theophilus. Theophilus had thenceforth but one object, namely, the ruin of St. Chrysostom.

He stirred up Epiphanius to go on a second encroaching and meddlesome expedition, into St. Chrysostom's diocese, to carry with him the "decrees" of the provincial synod of Cyprus which Epiphanius had, on this occasion, convened to condemn "Origen," and he demanded that the Patriarch of Constantinople should both sign these decrees and dismiss from his protection the Nitrian monks.

Chrysostom very properly refused to do either, not choosing to betray wronged men to unjust vengeance,

[1] Palladius, Bishop of Helenopolis, *Dial. de Chrysost.* (Opp. xiii. ed. Montfaucon); and the same facts are implied by Sozomen, *H. E.* viii. 12.

[2] Neander, *l. c.*

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and thinking it a sin and a bad precedent "that a person of so great learning and piety as Origen, and who had been so serviceable to the Church, who lived 200 years before, whose books no Council had condemned, should now be condemned by a small packed synod of his professed enemies."[1] Whereupon Epiphanius—instigated by Theophilus, by the Empress Eudoxia (a strange judge of Origen!), by some courtiers, and some licentious priests whom Chrysostom had been obliged to punish—recited the decrees of this synod before the people, obliquely censuring Chrysostom himself. After which, coming to a better mind and a fuller knowledge of the whole question, and perhaps a little touched in conscience by a sense of misdoing, Epiphanius prudently retired, and died on his way home.

Meanwhile Theophilus, by incessant intrigues, was enabled (A.D. 403) to convene at Chalcedon the worthless Synod of the Oak, where, supported by some partisans of his own, "and three or four fellow-workmen, or rather fellow-apostates,"[2] he deposed Chrysostom, *not for Origenism*, which was not so much as mentioned in his case, but for such faults as eating alone and despising hospitality. He had the further wickedness to use the Empress's hatred against the Patriarch to get him condemned for high treason. Driven from Constantinople, Chrysostom was immediately recalled amid the tumultuous joy of the people, in consequence of an earthquake which had terrified the conscience of Eudoxia. The following year, however, the machinations of Theo-

[1] Bishop Rust, *l. c.* Doucin (*Hist. de l'Origenisme*, pp. 237, 266) expresses astonishment (as well as he may) that for three centuries no one but St. Jerome and Theophilus disturbed the supposed heresies of Origenism. It would indeed be strange if these heresies were *really* chargeable on Origen. But Theophilus had his reasons for abandoning Origenism, and in eschatology St. Jerome was more than half an Origenist. Socrates (*H. E.* iv. 26) says that up to the fourth century Origen's name was glorious throughout the world.

[2] St. Isidore of Pelusium, i. *Ep.* 152.

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philus triumphed, and St. Chrysostom was driven out to exile and death (A.D. 404). Not content with having thus blighted the life of a saint of God, Theophilus pursued his memory in "an enormous and horrible volume,"[1] where among other names he calls him "the enemy of mankind," "prince of the sacrilegious," and an "impure demon," and charitably wishes that, if possible, some further punishment adequate to his crimes may be inflicted upon him. St. Jerome had the strange meanness to translate this performance, at the request of Theophilus, from Greek into Latin! And Theophilus himself, who professed such turncoat zeal against the heresies of Origen, afterwards (410) ordained Synesius a bishop, though that singular person was well known as a maintainer of Origenist and semi-pagan opinions![2] But the difference was that in the case of Synesius Theophilus had no private vengeance to pursue, and his assault on Origenism had merely been "a convenient means of gratifying his private passions."[3]

Thus, then, the first burst of fury against Origen was due to the revenge of an "impious dissembler" —Theophilus; and to the votaries of an ignorant heresy—that of the Anthropomorphites; aided by the rage of an adulterous Empress—Eudoxia. And, after all, this fury *left untouched* the one doctrine which is now almost exclusively connected with the name and memory of the hapless Origen! Such were the persons and these the decisions which, according to Dr. Pusey, "secured the faith."

"Non tali dextrâ, non defensoribus istis!"

[1] Facundus Hermian. *Defens.* vi. 5, *apud* Gibbon, iii. 189.

[2] Synesius, *Origenis studiosissimus;* Pagi, *Crit. Hist. in Ann. Baronii*, p. 108.

[3] Neander, iv. 489. "The dogma of Origen," says Pagi, "had many, and those the most celebrated, defenders. . . And Theophilus was privately a most diligent reader of Origen, whom he publicly abused, and whom, though dead, he first deprived of Church communion, and devoted to curse."—*In Baronium, Ann.* A.D. 410, p. 103.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE FIFTH OECUMENICAL COUNCIL.

"The arbitrary will of an Emperor governed by court intrigue brought it about that a great Church-teacher, whose influence had been of no small weight in the development of theological doctrines, should be condemned as a heretic [1]; while the fickle mind of a Roman bishop whose instability of character made him the sport of circumstances, must triumph over the better spirit of the West."—NEANDER, iv. 281.

"Generalia Concilia . . . quia ex hominibus constant qui non omnes Spiritu et Verbo Dei reguntur, et errare possunt, et interdum errarunt."—*Art.* xxi.

ANOTHER century and a half rolled away, and we are told of another condemnation of Origen—equally vague; even more disputable; absolutely unconnected with the wider hope of God's mercy; beside the mark even as regards Universalism; and proceeding from persons no less disreputable than those whose conduct we have just been passing in review.

It is the condemnation of "Origenism" by the Home Synod at Constantinople, and the asserted condemnation of Origen by the Fifth Oecumenical Council.

The former synods bring us into contact with such persons as Theophilus and Eudoxia; the latter were due to the ecclesiastical jealousies and court intrigues

[1] I shall give reasons for doubting this assertion.

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which surrounded the persons of Theodora and Justinian. I will endeavour to narrate these events with the utmost possible brevity.

The Monophysite heresy—which "confounded the substance" of Christ—had been condemned by the Council of Chalcedon. Theodora—whose past infamies should have prevented her, as they ought also to have prevented Eudoxia, from profanely meddling with the Church's theology—was an active intriguer on behalf of the Monophysites. She made a tool of her dull and pedantic husband, whose favourite passion it was to lay down dogmas for the Church's guidance, and to enforce their acceptance by cruelty and persecution when bribes and cajolery had failed. Keen in the detection, and remorseless in the punishment, of what he deemed to be heresy, Justinian ended by inventing a new heresy and died in the attempt to corrupt the doctrines to which, by the practice of the syllogism of violence, it had been his special pride to give an imperial security.

In pursuit of her design Theodora had bribed Vigilius, by the offer of the Bishopric of Rome and a large sum of money, to give a written agreement that he would try to overthrow the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon. Being a man who knew but little of theological questions, and cared less, he secretly declared himself a Monophysite, and pledged himself to anathematise the three great Syrian Fathers, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret, and Ibas of Edessa, whom the Monophysites hated, but of whom the two latter had been declared orthodox by the Council of Chalcedon.

Meanwhile two Monophysites who belonged to the party which was called "Origenist," but which was very unworthy of bearing the great name of Origen, were busy and influential in the palace of Justinian. These were Theodorus Ascidas, Bishop of the Cappadocian Caesarea, and Domitian, Bishop of Ancyra.

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Jealous of their influence,[1] Peter of Jerusalem engaged a Roman deacon named Pelagius[2] to draw up an indictment against Origen and his works, and to send it through Mennas, Patriarch of Constantinople, to the Emperor. Justinian was thus furnished with an opportunity in which he specially delighted—that of dictating Church dogmas. He urged Mennas to summon a Home Synod—a synod of bishops—or, as we should rather call them, rectors of large parishes residing at Constantinople. Justinian wrote to Mennas a lengthy epistle still extant—

> "Verbosa et grandis epistola venit
> Ex Capreis"—

in which he entered at great length into the doctrines of Origen, and required the synod to condemn them in nine canons, one of which was, that "If any one says or thinks that the punishment of devils and impious men is temporary, and that it will one day end, or that there will be a restitution and redintegration of devils or of impious men, let him be anathema." Passages from this entirely unauthoritative letter of Justinian are in this controversy often palmed off as a part of the edicts of the Home Synod, or even of the Fifth Oecumenial Council![3]

This, be it observed, was Justinian's opinion—*valeat quantum!*—and this was what he required. And of what possible value can the opinion of such a man be in any question as to the orthodoxy of Origen? With such a mind as Origen's, such a mind as Justinian's was wholly incompatible. He had no capacity for understanding him; he had still less power to sympathise with him. "For good or for evil, Justinian was wholly cast in the mould of formulas, he knew nothing higher than an edict"; and though he prided himself on being a defender of the faith, he

[1] Liberatus, *Breviar.* 33.
[2] Afterwards Pope, successor to Vigilius, A.D. 555.
[3] As in quite recent works.

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died not only a heretic, but a heretic who was endeavouring by sheer tyranny to enforce his heresy upon the Church. If Origen was happy in the holiness and greatness of his friends, he was no less happy in the disrepute and incompetence of many of his enemies.

The synod met; they read the garbled, second-hand, and virulently *ex parte* account of Origen's errors, and proceeded to condemn them in fifteen canons. Most happily for the cause of truth these fifteen canons are still extant. But among these fifteen canons, which any one may read for himself, *the canon which Justinian had dictated to the synod does not occur*, and the only reference made by the synod to Origen's views as to the future lies in the one single word "restitution." This was in their first canon, which ran as follows:—

"If any one asserts *the fabulous prae-existence of souls, and the monstrous restitution which follows from it*, let him be anathema."

The Emperor asked them to condemn Origen's Universalism, which included the conversion of devils. They in reply do not say a single definite word about any hope for the future of sinners, or about any probatory fire, or indeed about any single separate problem of eschatology, but, purposely leaving everything as vague as they found it, they combine together "prae-existence and that portentous restitution (*τὴν τερατώδη ἀποκατάστασιν*) consequent on it," and condemn that in a lump.

Even if they had distinctly condemned Universalism, their decision—having no pretence to Oecumenical authority—would merely show the opinion then prevalent at Constantinople. But *in a most marked manner they abstained from doing so.* They do not follow the Emperor's guidance in this matter; they do not adopt his suggested canon; they only pronounce their anathema against a very complex

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system of theological philosophy which comprised prae-existence, cycles of probation, the salvability of devils as well as men, and a multitude of other details which, with very inconvenient comprehensiveness, they describe as "that monstrous restitution consequent on the doctrine of prae-existence." It would have been perfectly open to any of the holy and learned Churchmen who accepted Origen's larger hope to subscribe to this anathema, and to say, I, too, reject (not indeed the Scriptural doctrine of a restitution), but "*that portentous* restitution." And accordingly this canon, as well as the rest, was subscribed—whether honestly or not—by Theodorus Ascidas and Domitian, avowed Origenists as they both were.

But happily the synod do not leave us in doubt as to what was the sense in which they used the word "restitution." They use the word again in the fourteenth canon, to which I shall call special attention.

"If any one says that there will be a single unity (*unam henadem*) of all rational beings, their substances and individualities being taken away together with their bodies, and also that there will be an identity of cognition as also of persons, and that *in the fabulous restitution* they will only be naked even as they had existed in that prae-existence which they insanely introduce, let him be anathema."

What has this to do with "the larger hope"? If any one wishes to see how little a condemnation of "Origenism" necessarily involved any condemnation of Universalism, he has only to read the strange medley of vagaries attributed to Origen in all the fourteen succeeding canons, which touch on questions as dead and as unpractical as it is possible to conceive. Those canons condemn opinions which most persons would now pronounce to be unintelligible nonsense, and which probably represent philosophical speculations refracted and reflected through

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the hazy brains of those who had not the least conception of what the great Alexandrian thinker had really meant to convey. Of such opinions we shall be quite safe in asserting that they cannot in the least represent Origen's real views; and the wonder is that no one—like Pelagius at Diospolis—asked leave "to condemn any who held them as fools, rather than to anathematise them as heretics."[1]

This, then, was "the monstrous restitution" as defined by the synod itself! Will any one say that this is a condemnation of the simple hope that God may reach and save the souls even of all men, much less of the majority, beyond the grave? What living Universalist would scruple to subscribe to such canons as these? And the whole movement caused such a scandal that Theodorus Ascidas afterwards said that "Pelagius, who had caused the condemnation of Origen, and himself, who had caused that of 'the Three Chapters,' deserved to be burnt alive for what they had done."

The trouble excited by the action of Peter of Jerusalem, the Roman Pelagius, and Justinian, did not, however, end with the Home Synod. Theodorus Ascidas and Domitian, wishing to divert attention from Origen altogether, tried to stir up an agitation against the three eminent Syrian teachers, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret, and Ibas of Edessa, who, from their controversial ability, had always been hateful to the Monophysites. Now it is more than probable that all three of these great leaders of the school of Antioch agreed with Origen in his so-called

[1] "Solche Ketzereien waren es mit deren Verdammung sich eine Kirchenversammlung beschäftigte *grösstentheils Grillen und Träumereien* über ein vergangenes oder noch künftiges Leben, wovon die eine Parthey so viel verstand als die andere. Bannflüche auf dieselben zu schleudern war daher *beinahe lächerlich, wenigstens* sehr unnütz; denn die Anhänger derselben wurden dadurch nicht zur Erkenntniss eines Irrthums geführt, sondern mehr darinnen durch eine solche Heftigkeit bestärkt."—SCHRÖCKH, xviii. 55.

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Universalism, although they had written against his allegorical method of exegesis. Nothing, therefore, was farther from the wishes of Theodorus and Domitian than to call in question the Origenistic eschatology, which was held by themselves as well as by the teachers who were condemned in the edict of Justinian (A.D. 544) "on the Three Chapters." The Fifth Oecumenical Council was summoned (A.D. 553) for the express purpose of making every bishop subscribe to the condemnation of these "three Chapters."

Happily I am not here obliged to relate the miserable shiftings and tergiversations of the Pope Vigilius when he found himself in the Emperor's power at Constantinople. The only questions which concern us are I., Did the Fifth Oecumenical Council condemn Origen? and II., Did a condemnation of Origen involve a condemnation of his view that all men would be ultimately saved?

I. Did the Fifth Oecumenical Council condemn Origen?

The answer is that, i., Even if it did, it only did so —in spite of all ecclesiastical precedent,—when he was undefended, and without any evidence as to his real views (of which there is not so much as a trace in the Acts of the Council),[1] by a cursory and grossly unjust mention of his name in the eleventh canon, together with those of "Arius, Eunomius, Macedonius, Apollinaris, and Eutyches and all other heretics, with their impious writings," in the fourteenth canon.

ii. Even if it did, yet I say, with Canon Westcott, that "there is in a life of humble self-sacrifice something too majestic, too divine, to be overthrown by the uncandid sentence of an ecclesiastical synod."

iii. A condemnation of "Origen" means a condemnation of a vast number of opinions,[2] probably

[1] See Dupin, v. 189-207; Basnage, *Hist. de l'Égl.* i. 519-542.
[2] Even Doucin admits this.—*Hist. de l'Origenisme*, p. 388.

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misunderstood and misrepresented, which were attributed to him, but which have no connection with a simple hope of man's final restitution.

iv. But "it is not impossible," as Neander says, "that the name of Origen was but a later insertion."[1] Neander gives no reasons, but the following may be offered :—

a. The Acts of the Council have been accidentally or intentionally mixed up and confused with the Canons of the mere Home Synod of A.D. 541, and with the letters of Justinian to that Synod and to Mennas.[2] The genuineness of the fifteen canons is far from certain, and passages of Justinian's letter are often ignorantly quoted as though they were part of these canons.

β. There was a strong desire, in later times, to be able to say that Origen had been condemned by an Oecumenical synod, so that there was every temptation to insert his name. The same causes produce the same effects, and lead to the scarcely honest assertion so often repeated, that Universalism was condemned by synods and councils which never so much as touched upon the question.

γ. It is certain that the writings of Origen were not

[1] Neander, *Ch. Hist.* iv. 492, *E. tr.* Gieseler says without hesitation (*Eccles. Hist.* ii. 102, *E. tr.*), "No further notice was taken of the Origenists." Cave says, "Nec Origenis, nec Origenistarum, nisi capitulo xi. [where, as I shall show, the name of Origen is of doubtful genuineness] vel levissima mentio; multo minus causae istius plenaria cognitio."—*Hist. Literar.* p. 558.

[2] The confusion partly arose from the fact that the Second Council of Constantinople, A.D. 553, was the Fifth Oecumenical Council, and the Home Synod, A.D. 541, was the fifth council or synod which met at Constantinople.—See F. N. Oxenham, *Letter on Everlasting Punishment*, p. 21. The Rev. J. S. Blunt seems to have arrived at the same conclusion, though he strongly opposes any form of Universalism. He says, "When the Fifth General Council met they did not take any notice of these fifteen canons [of the Home Synod] or of the Origenistic opinions which had been condemned, and notwithstanding the agitation raised concerning the three chapters, the only conciliar condemnation of their opinions was in the obscure synod referred to."—*Dict. of Sects s. v. Origenists.*

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discussed at this council, but only in the synod, if even there.[1]

δ. The other heretics mentioned had all been more or less directly condemned in the first Four Councils, to which this canon expressly refers; Origen alone had not.

ε. It is, to say the least, very suspicious that Origen's name, first in order of chronology, should stand last in the list.[2]

ζ. Theodorus Ascidas, as Bishop of Caesarea, took a very leading part in the Fifth Council, and he would certainly have endeavoured to keep out the name of Origen, from whom it had been his express object to divert attention.[3]

η. His name does not occur in the preamble to the Acts of the Council or in the subscription to it by the Patriarch Eutychius.[4]

θ. He is not mentioned by Vigilius, Pelagius II., or Gregory the Great, who mention the Three Chapters.[5]

ι. It is certain that there has been *some* confusion. Cyril of Scythopolis, in his life of St. Saba, and Evagrius (*H. E.* iv. 38) do indeed say that "Origen" was condemned at this Council, but they may very easily have fallen into the confusion which I have mentioned, and it is Gieseler's opinion that they did.

If they made this not unnatural mistake, others would follow them. The later authorities quoted by Dr. Pusey have therefore no independent value, nor can their assertions outweigh the silence of three

[1] Even there they seem only to have read the garbled and misunderstood extracts scraped together without possibility of explanation by Pelagius, &c.

[2] If it be said that this is because he was last condemned it throws fresh light on the fact that even his opinions on the nature of Christ—which were probably quite misunderstood—had not been condemned by any conciliar decree for the three centuries which had elapsed since his death. Origen died A.D. 253. The Fifth Council was held in A.D. 553.

[3] Liberatus, *Brev.* 24.

[4] Harduin III., *Collat.* viii. p. 193.

[5] See Schröckh, xviii. 56.

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contemporaries—Facundus of Hermiane; Liberatus in his *Breviarum;* and Victor of Tununum.[1] Besides this we have the silence of the Acts of the Council themselves. The error once rooted, it would naturally be perpetuated; and as for Nicephorus, who wrote nine centuries afterwards, the mistake into which he fell is obvious on the face of his own narrative. He as well as others failed to observe that the Fifth Council of Constantinople was a term which applied alike to the Home Synod and to the Fifth Oecumenical Council, which was held at Constantinople.

κ. The silence of the Acts of the Council about Origen ought to weigh far more than the authorities adduced on the other side, for there is not the least probability in the suggestion that they were mutilated. They could not have been mutilated without the connivance of Eutychius the Patriarch, and his character is above all suspicion. He would have no temptation whatever to suppress facts which told against Origen; but there were multitudes who would be very strongly tempted to invent such facts. It is, for instance, all but certain that some of the documents collected against Theodore of Mopsuestia in the proceedings of this Council are later additions.[2]

But (II) Even if we grant that "Origen" was condemned, did that involve any condemnation of his "Universalism"?

Most unquestionably not; for these reasons:—

i. The name "Origenist" had many different meanings.[3]

ii. The leading promoters of the Council held the eschatological opinions of Origen.

iii. The assembled Bishops expressly referred to

[1] Dr. Pusey claims the authority of the latter (p. 137); but Victor does not mention the condemnation of Origen.

[2] See Gieseler, ii. 1; Walch, *Ketzerhistorie*, viii. 281—291.

[3] Schröckh, xviii. 60.

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St. Gregory of Nazianzus, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and to other Fathers who were avowed admirers of Origen, and of whom one at least had repeatedly, and in the most public manner, expressed approval of Universalist hopes. The last circumstance seems to me decisive. If Universalism had been at all in question, would it not have been the most monstrous injustice to quote St. Gregory of Nyssa as a canonised defender of orthodoxy in the same breath in which Origen was condemned as an impious heretic? No unbiased reader can deny the force of these considerations.

III. But, after all, the authority of the Fifth Council goes for very little.[1] It was by no means a creditable assembly. No one can entertain much respect for its authority who is adequately acquainted with its history. Its determinations are in no sense binding on the English Church. It was born and died in jealousies and counter-jealousies. It was disgraced by the machinations of corrupt courtiers. Intrigue stood by its cradle, and intrigue followed its hearse. It reversed the decision of the Council of Chalcedon, which had listened, without impatience, to the praises of Theodore of Mopsuestia, and had admitted the orthodoxy of Ibas as well as that of Theodoret, after hearing the very letter which the Fifth Council condemned.[2] It originated in a disingenuous attempt to undermine the authority of the Council of Chalcedon in the interests of the Monophysite heresy; it laid itself open to the just accusation of breaking an understood principle in attacking the honoured dead who could not answer for themselves.[3] It awoke the indignant

[1] Undoubtedly the Fifth Council did condemn Theodoret for alleged Nestorianism; yet the Jesuit Sirmond, in his *Life of Theodoret*, did not hesitate to declare that Theodoret was quite innocent of Nestorianism.

[2] *Mansi*, vii. 189.

[3] For this reason several protests were raised against it, *e.g.* by Fulgentius Ferrandus (*Ep. ad Pelag.*). "Ut pro mortuis fratribus non generentur inter vivos scandala." The North African Bishop

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protests of Pontianus, Fulgentius Ferrandus, Liberatus, Victor of Tununum, Rusticus, Facundus of Hermiane, and others, against its uncalled-for dogmatism, caused by the zeal of those who wanted to teach what they had never learned. It led to an outburst of cruel and wanton persecution. Its decisions were for a long time rejected by the Churches of North Africa, Spain, and Gaul. It was slightly regarded by Pope Gregory the Great. It displayed nothing so much as the arbitrary will of a meddling and heretical Emperor, and the fickle mind of an ignorant and simoniacal Pope.[1] It had the directly mischievous effect of stifling free inquiry, checking theological development, and depriving the Church of the writings of some of her greatest and holiest scholars. It was a condemnation of philosophic thinkers by men incapable of philosophic thought.[2] And, after all, it is doubtful whether its canons are genuine, and whether it condemned Origen at all. Even if it did, that condemnation has no bearing on the simple question, "Will all men ultimately find God's mercy or not?" still less on the only question with which I am personally concerned, "Is there any hope beyond the grave for souls which have died in imperfect penitence?"

Pontianus spoke in similar terms. Vigilius, in one of his many wavering moods, urged the same objection. Eutychius got the Patriarchate (from which Justinian subsequently deposed him) for proving that it was quite fair to anathematise the dead, since Josiah had burned the bones of the priests of Bethel! If the great writers whom the Council condemned were by that time in the company of saints and angels, they must, says Gibbon, "have smiled at the idle fury of the theological insects who still crawled on the surface of the earth."

[1] See Neander, *Ch. Hist.* iv. 281; Gibbon, iv. 366-388. Justinian before his death in A.D. 564 was endeavouring to force on the Church by persecution the heresy of the Aphthartodocetae, which happily died with him. Baronius "almost pronounces his damnation."

[2] Let the reader study the perfectly unbiassed criticism of Schröckh, xviii. 55, and he will find these views amply supported.

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CHAPTER XIII.

PRINCIPLES OF SCRIPTURE EXEGESIS.

"I will trust in the mercy of God for ever, and beyond" (*le-olam vaed*).—Ps. lii. 8.

"What is man, and whereto serveth he? What is his good, and what is his evil? The number of man's days at the most are a hundred years. As a drop of water unto the sea, and a gravel stone in comparison of the sand; so are a thousand years to the days of eternity. Therefore is God patient with them, and poureth forth His mercy upon them. He saw and perceived their end to be evil, therefore He multiplied His compassion."—ECCLUS. xviii. 8-12.

"Christo dedit Pater omne judicium. Poterit ergo te ille damnare quem redemit a morte, pro quo se obtulit, cujus istam suae mortis mercem esse cognoscit? Nonne dicet quae utilitas in sanguine meo, si damno quem ipse salvavi? Deinde consideras Judicem, non consideras Advocatum? Potest ille severiorem ferre sententiam qui interpellare non desinit, ut paternae reconciliationis in nos conferatur gratia."—ST. AMBROS. *De Jacob. et Vit. Beat.* I.

"We all are aware that by means of the acumen of later times many things both from the Gospels and the other Scriptures are now more clearly developed and more exactly understood than they once were; whether it was that the ice was not yet broken by the ancients, and their times were unequal to the task of accurately sounding the open sea of Scripture, or that it will ever be possible in so extensive a field, let the reapers be ever so skilful, to glean somewhere after them. For there are even now a great number of obscure passages in the Gospel, which I doubt not posterity will understand much better."—CARDINAL FISHER, Bishop of Rochester, *Assert. Luther. Confut.* 18.

"Our whole nature leads us to ascribe all moral perfection to God, and to deny all imperfection in Him. And this will be for ever a

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practical proof of His moral character to such as will consider what practical proof is, because it is the voice of God speaking to us."—BISHOP BUTLER.

"Reason is the only faculty by which we have to judge of anything, even of revelation itself."—BISHOP BUTLER.

"Many have imbibed the unhappy prejudice that our public version is so accurate and unexceptionable, and so faithful a transcript, as to suspend all labour employed this way."—BENNET, *Olam Haneshamoth*, p. 15.

"The Bible has fallen much into the hands of those who imagine that a few favourite 'texts' will suffice to prove that Omnipotence is on the side of the most extravagant theologies. The world has already suffered too much from sytems founded on a few wrested quotations to allow of much reticence in repudiating these hermeneutical methods."—REV. E. WHITE, *Life in Christ*, p. 348.

"1. God's Word must be interpreted as consistent with itself.

"2. It must be interpreted as consistent with His own character.

"3. It must be interpreted as consistent with reason and moral intuition."—G. HILL.

"The evidence accompanying the popular interpretation [of the doctrine of eternal suffering] is by no means to be compared to that which establishes our common Christianity, and therefore the fate of the Christian religion is not to be considered as implicated in the belief or disbelief of the popular doctrine."—ROBERT HALL, *Works*, v. 529.

"The laws of men are but the injunctions of mortality; but what the heart prompts is the voice from Heaven within us."—SIR WALTER SCOTT, *Fortunes of Nigel*.

"La Charité, qui sait tout oublier des hommes, et tout espérer de Dieu."—OZANAM, *Poëtes Francisc.* p. 427.

"I scarcely ever met with a person who did not give me the impression that he held his creed under the law; referring to particular texts, but not to a spirit, apparently not even seeing the desirableness of it."—*Letters of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen*, p. 25.

BEFORE I once again examine what Scripture has to reveal to us respecting the doctrine of future retribution, it will be necessary to make a few preliminary remarks.

The first and most general applies to that whole system which sways my view of the faith of Christ. If, as has been said, there are two systems of religious doctrine in one of which "sin" is the central

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thought; "terror" the motive power; "personal salvation," the object:—and in the other, "God as revealed in Christ," the centre; "the goodness of God" the motive power; "the restoration of His scattered children to Him" the object,—then I think that the former may be taken to represent much of the popular theology and the latter the Gospel of Christ. The result of the former is too apt to be a hard and loveless religionism: the latter may, by God's grace, develop the spiritual mind.

There are many who make the text, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. v. 11), the keynote of their religion and their preaching. That "text" like most of the others adduced for a similar purpose, is mistranslated and most egregiously misapplied. It does not so much as touch on the outermost sphere of the subject which we have been examining. The context almost demonstrates its meaning to be simply this—"knowing that the fear of God is the principle of my own life, I try to persuade you that it is so, and that I am no hypocrite; my sincerity is known to God, and I strive to make it known to you."

The outline of the revelation of God which polarises my own thoughts is very different from that which uses terror as an object of persuasion. It is that God is love; that the object of true religion is to be like Him; that destruction is to fall from that foundation and fail of that end; that salvation is the deliverance from that error and from that sin; and that God the Saviour is manifested in the name of Jesus because He saves His people from their sins.[1]

These are the impressions which I have learnt from the teaching of God in Scripture and in life, and there is nothing in the Bible which militates against them if it be interpreted in accordance with the following axioms.

[1] See *On Truth and Error*, by J. Hamilton of St. Ernan's, p. 22.

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1. The authority of Scripture must not be confounded with the wholly unauthoritative and sometimes strangely mistaken inferences which even for centuries together have been deduced from it by fallible men.

2. No Scripture is of "private interpretation." It can only be interpreted by the known rules of human language, and by the acknowledged laws of philological and historic criticism.

3. The true meaning of the words of Scripture has been, to an almost incredible extent, confused by the meaning which those words have gradually acquired. They have been taken to imply not what they really mean, but what, to the minds of modern readers, they erroneously *connote*. It is assumed that "they cover the whole extent of the meaning which to the reader himself they have come to imply." They are quoted as decisive about controversies with which in their exact and original meaning they have not so much as the most distant connexion. If I say of a man that he was "another Cromwell," I may mean either that he was a great and glorious ruler, or that he was an ambitious and fanatical hypocrite, according as I adopt one or other view of Cromwell's character. It would be preposterous for a reader to say that I must *necessarily* mean that the man whom I thus compare with Cromwell was a fanatical hypocrite, simply because *he* takes that view of Cromwell's character. My meaning could only be discovered either from the context or from some other statement of mine respecting Cromwell's character. Yet in Scriptural arguments words and phrases are quoted as decisive, of which the asserted meaning is resolutely disputed and even disproved.

4. The meaning of Scripture must be determined by its whole drift and tenour, and not by picking out of it a few isolated passages to be tessellated into systems to which they were long anterior. "A text," says a

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writer in the *Church Quarterly* (July, 1871), "may be made to mean anything or nothing according to the prepossessions with which the interpreter approaches it. But problems like this must be measured by wider considerations—theological considerations based on the great facts of nature and revelation." It is the neglect of this principle which has given rise to the bitter but not undeserved epigram—

> "Hic liber est in quo quaerit sua dogmata quisque,
> Invenit et pariter dogmata quisque sua."

I will make a few remarks on these axioms.

1. We must discriminate between the teaching of Scripture and the fallible inferences which have been drawn from Scripture. Can there be any more conspicuous proof of the unauthoritative character of such inferences than the immense *diversity* of the theological systems deduced from Scripture exclusively by men of the most entire honesty and learning?

Let me, by way of illustration, show the danger which must arise from pressing into the service of theology the details of parables. This has been done to a very large extent in treating of eschatology. Unlimited inferences have, for instance, been drawn from the Parable of Dives and Lazarus, regardless of the fact that (1) that it is not only a parable, but also full of metaphoric language; (2) that the tremendous inferences built upon its symbols must at least be modified by other inferences equally valid; and (3) above all that Dives is in the Intermediate, not in the Final State.

Or, if we need any proof that "parabolic theology is not demonstrative,"[1] let us take the parable of the Unjust Steward. One plain and inestimable lesson of that parable, the need of an active energy

[1] "Omnes sensus Scripturae fundantur super unum sensum litteralem, ex quo solo potest trahi argumentum, non autem ex iis quae secundum allegoriam dicuntur."—THOS. AQUIN. *Summa*, i. Qu. i. Art. x.

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and a heavenly wisdom in using the things of earth so as thereby to be helped, not hindered, in winning the things eternal—lies plainly upon its surface. But when commentators come to explain the details of the parable scarcely any two of them agree. Thus the Unjust Steward has been taken by different commentators to mean the Pharisees, the Publicans, Judas Iscariot, Pontius Pilate, Satan, the Apostle Paul,[1] and even the blessed Lord Himself![2]

Again, if we look at single passages, the instance furnished by Gal. iii. 19, 20, will show us how little we can rely on inferential exegesis. There is in that passage no insuperable difficulty, yet there have been "upwards of three hundred" different interpretations of it!

Sometimes a single word has been most objectionably pressed by inference into a complete system. Such is the word "ransom." Our deliverance from sin and death by the death of Christ is called in Scripture "a ransom," because we were thereby set free from bondage. But when men began to speculate on the word and to draw all sorts of inferences from it, there rose the whole forensic scheme of redemption, and for nearly a thousand years,—roughly speaking from Origen to Anselm,—the notion prevailed that the ransom was paid by Christ to Satan—a notion thoroughly Manichaean and absolutely unscriptural, involving, as Anselm pointed out, a recognition by the All Good and the All Merciful that evil and injustice had established *a right* to exist in the universe which He had made.[3]

2. It should be self-evident that since "the law speaks in the tongue of the sons of men" Scripture can only be interpreted in accordance with the significance of language ascertained by human thought and study. The inner depths of the truths which its words convey

[1] Theophilus of Antioch (? Jer. *ad Algas. Ep.* 121). [2] Unger.
[3] See Oxenham, *Catholic Eschatology*, p. 167.

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can indeed only be brought home to the soul by the work of the Holy Spirit; but the Holy Spirit does not inspire a supernatural knowledge of the laws of grammar, nor of the historic circumstances and national idioms which determine the meaning of the sacred writers. The intuition of a saint may enable him to see more deeply into the spiritual force of a passage than the erudition of a scholar, but the commentaries of many saints show that no amount of spiritual insight could save them from complete misapprehension as to the significance of thousands of words and of hundreds of texts. Spiritual knowledge is one thing; biblical criticism is another. About the great main truths of Christianity all Christians are agreed. They are plain and indisputable. The wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. He who runs may read them. But spiritual attainments, as has been proved by innumerable instances, do not protect a man from the adoption, and even the intolerant maintenance, of pernicious error in disputable matters. Cartwright, the leader of the Presbyterians in the days of Queen Elizabeth, was a good man, yet he said that heretics ought to be burned even after repentance, and that "if this was extreme and bloody, he was content to be so counted with the Holy Ghost." Cardinal Borromeo, who in the plague at Milan tended the sick with the assiduity of a saint, afterwards persecuted heretics with the fury of an inquisitor. Calvin's holiness did not save him from polluting the pure stream of Gospel truth by the influxes of a remorseless logic which led him to conclusions utterly revolting to the moral sense. John Wesley was a man worthy of the utmost admiration, yet he said that to cease to believe in witches was to give up the authority of the Bible.[1]

3. Scripture must be interpreted in accordance with

[1] See this subject, on which I can here only touch, a little more fully illustrated in two papers of mine on "Wresting the Scriptures," in the *Expositor* for 1880.

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the original meaning of the terms which it employs. The tyranny of words exists as much in the language of theology as in every other branch of human study. It would be easy to mention words which have exercised a deadly influence in obstructing progress and knowledge, because they carry with them a train of associations which they have gradually acquired, but which do not properly belong to them.[1] It is hardly possible to exaggerate the consequences which are traceable throughout history as having resulted from single expressions. Consider the effects produced on the Saxons by the word *niedrig*; on the French by the word *gloire*; on many nations by the simple onomatopoeia *barbarian*; on philosophy by the use of the word "*attraction*"; on our Indian government by the misapplication of the word "*landed proprietor*." All these, besides multitudes of theological terms, are instances of those "rabble-charming words" which, as South says, "have so much wild-fire wrapped up in them." Consider again the marvellous correlation of language and national morality. There is "a besetting intoxication which this verbal magic, if I may so call it, brings upon the mind of men. . . . Words are able to persuade men out of what they find and feel, to reverse the very impressions of sense, and to amuse them with fancies and paradoxes even in spite of nature and experience. He who shall duly consider these matters shall find that there is a certain bewitching or fascination in words which makes them operate with a force beyond what we can naturally give account of."[2]

4. The fourth axiom,—that Scripture must be

[1] "Illâm dumtaxat Scripturarum interpretationem pro orthodoxâ et genuinâ agnoscimus quae ex ipsis petita Scripturis (ex ingenio utique ejus linguae in quâ sunt scripta, secundum circumstantias item expensa, et pro ratione locorum vel similium vel dissimilium plurimorum quoque et clariorum exposita) cum regula fidei et charitatis congrunt, et ad gloriam Dei, hominumque salutem eximie faciunt."—BULLINGER, *Conf. Helvet.* ii. 2.

[2] South's *Sermons*. See my *Language and Languages*, p. 244.

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understood and interpreted as a whole, and not by its isolated and uncertain expressions,—is too self-evident to need further remark.

The application of these axioms bears directly on the subject before us.

(1) It is a matter of simple demonstration that the words which are prevalent in Christian eschatology have exercised for centuries an influence which does not belong to them. They have acquired meanings which were not their original meanings, and which now convey impressions entirely alien from their true significance.

Such, for instance, is the word "damnation."

The words "damn" and its derivatives do not once occur in the Old Testament. In the New Testament they are the exceptional and arbitrary translation of two Greek verbs or their derivatives, which occur 308 times.[1] These words are *apollumi* and *krino*. *Apoleia*, "destruction," or "waste," is once rendered "damnation" (2 Pet. ii. 3), and once "damnable" (2 Pet. ii. 1); *krino*, "judge," occurs 114 times, and is only once rendered "damned" (2 Thess. ii. 12). *Krima*, "judgment," or "sentence," occurs 24 times, and is 7 times rendered "damnation." *Krisis*, "judging," occurs 49 times, and is 3 times rendered "damnation." *Katakrino*, "I condemn," occurs 24 times, and is twice only rendered "be damned."

Now turn to a modern dictionary, and you will see "damnation" defined as "exclusion from divine mercy; condemnation to eternal punishment." In common usage the word has no other sense.

But to say that such is the necessary meaning of the words which are rendered by "damn" and "damnation," is to say what is absurdly and even wickedly false. It is to say that a young widow who marries again must be damned to endless torments

[1] See Eternity in *Concordance of Texts*, p. 75 (Bagster's).

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(1 Tim. v. 12, "having damnation," *krima*), although St. Paul expressly recommends young widows to do so two verses later on. It is to say that every one who ever eats the Lord's Supper unworthily, eats and drinks "eternal punishment" to himself, though St. Paul adds, almost in the next verse, that the judgment (*krima*) is disciplinary or educational (*παιδεύομεθα*), to save us from condemnation (*ἵνα μὴ κατακριθῶμεν*, 1 Cor. xi. 29-12). It is to say that "the Day of Judgment" ought to be called "the Day of Damnation" (John v. 29). It is curious that our translators have chosen this most unfortunate variation of "damn" and its cognates only fifteen times out of upwards of two hundred times that *krino* and its cognates occur; and that they have used it for *krisis* and *krima*, not for the stronger compounds *katakrima*, &c. The translators, however, may not be to blame. It is probable that "damn" was once a milder word than condemn, and had a far milder meaning than that which modern eschatology has furnished to modern blasphemy. We find from an Act passed when a John Russell was Chancellor (in the reign of Richard III. or Henry VII.), that the sanction of an Act against extorted benevolences is called "a damnation"—that is, "the infliction of a loss."[1] This is the true etymological meaning of the word, as derived from *damnum*, "a loss"; and this original meaning is still found in such words as "damnify," "indemnify," and "indemnity." In the margin of 1 Cor. xi. 29, we find "judgment" for "damnation"; whereas in verse 32 the "judgment" of the Lord is milder than His "condemnation." Dr. Hey, in his lecture on the Ninth Article, thinks that the phrase, "it deserveth God's wrath and damnation," is used in the milder sense of the word which was originally prevalent. However this may be, the word has, as the Bishop of Chester says, undergone a

[1] See Campbell's *Lives of the Lord Chancellors, l.c.*

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modification of meaning from the lapse of time, and it is an unmixed gain that both it and its congeners will wholly disappear from the revised version of the English Bible. "Judgment" and "condemnation" are the true representatives of *krisis* and *katakrisis*, and they are not steeped, like the word "damnation," in a mass of associated conceptions which do not naturally or properly belong to them.

(2) Equally unfortunate is the word "hell."

It is unfortunate because, though its original meaning was harmless, it has now acquired the deadliest conceivable significance. Archbishop Usher, in his *Answer to a Jesuit*, tells us that (since *helan* meant "to cover,") to "hell the head" used to mean "to put on a hat," and a "hellier" meant a "slater." It was the name given to the place under the Exchequer Chambers where the king's debtors were confined. It was used also for the place where a tailor flung his shreds.

It is unfortunate because it has acquired a sense of endlessness which is not once predicated either of Sheol, or Hades, or (as we have already partly seen, and shall further see), of Gehenna. It is a fact, which any reader can at any time verify for himself, that duration of time is never so much as mentioned in the Bible in connection with Sheol or Hades; and if he be a candid seeker after truth, he can soon learn by study that it is neither predicated of Gehenna, nor formed any part of the normal Jewish conception of that metaphorical word.

It is unfortunate because it is used to render the three wholly different words—Sheol or Hades, Gehenna, and (in one place) Tartarus (2 Pet. ii. 4).

a. It is used for Sheol in such passages as "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," Ps. xvi. 10 (*i.e.* Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol, the dim underworld or abode of the dead—Acts ii. 27-31). In such a passage as this there is no more reason to

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render Sheol by hell than there would be in Gen. xxxvii. 35, to read "I will go down into hell, unto my son, mourning." The mistranslation, preserved in the article of the Creed, "He descended into hell," probably fixes in many minds the grievous error that our Blessed Lord endured (as some have actually asserted) the sufferings of the lost.

Sheol occurs in the Old Testament sixty-five times; is rendered "hell" thirty-one times; "grave" thirty-one times; and "pit" three times. It seems to be akin to שְׁעַל, "hollow of the hand," the outside of the world being regarded as a somewhat bent hand, the covered inside of the hand being Sheol. Yet can any words be more widely separated in their associations than the words "grave" and "hell"—the former word calling up images of rest and peace, the latter of endless and intolerable anguish?

It is profoundly unsatisfactory that ordinary readers should be at the mercy of a caprice which can thus use a word of such tremendous associations, or can substitute for it a word so mild and colourless as "the grave," and that without so much as assigning a reason. "Sheol," says the learned author of *Olam Haneschamoth*, "is a term as opposite to hell as light is to darkness." It ought to be rendered always either Sheol or "the under-world."

β. It is used for Hades.[1] That word occurs in the New Testament eleven times, and in ten of them is rendered "hell." In no one of the eleven does it mean "hell."[2] In Luke xvi. 23, the rendering "in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments," has

[1] Hades, "the grave," the region of the dead, though it is the exact equivalent of Sheol, is only once rendered by "grave," 1 Cor. xv. 55. It is certainly not derived from *ἀ* and *Fιδ*, "the unseen," as the aspirate shows. Whether it is (by antiphrasis) connected with *ἀνδάνω ἔαδον* may be doubted. Perhaps it may have some connection with the Hebrew עוּד, *ad*. The Assyrian *Bit-edi* = House of Eternity (?).

[2] See Matt. xi. 23; xvi. 18; Luke x. 15; xvi. 23; Acts, ii. 27, 31; Rev. i. 18; vi. 8; xx. 13, 14.

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led to multitudes of false inferences, which are at once dissipated when we render the verse "in Hades."

There are many other passages where the use of "hell" for "Hades" leads to dangerously false conclusions. Our translators might have been aware that it would do so. In 1 Cor. xv. 55 they would not venture to render the clause by "O hell, where is thy victory?" (though in every other instance they render "Hades" by "hell") because, by their day the word had begun to acquire its darkest shades of meaning, and they knew too well that if the word "hell" be used in its popular conception, its victory over the human race has been final and terrible indeed.

In estimating the sense which the word "Hades" conveyed to the Jewish mind, it must not be forgotten that Philo defined the retributive Hades to mean simply the life of the wicked.[1]

γ. "Hell" is used in rendering the verb "to plunge in Tartarus" in 2 Pet. ii. 4, where it is no less unsuitable, because St. Peter is expressly referring to a temporary, not an endless state, in which "the angels who sinned" are "reserved for judgment." Seeing the licence of theological inference, and the way in which whole systems are built like inverted pyramids on isolated expressions, it is astonishing that some have not argued from St. Peter's mention of Tartarus that the stories of Ixion, Tantalus, and Sisyphus must be true. The inference would be quite as secure and quite as logical as many of those which have contributed to the mediaeval conception.

δ. "Hell" is used for Gehenna twelve times. Now, in endeavouring to discover the meaning of this word, I will simply ask the reader to observe these plain facts :—

[1] *Ὁ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν Ἅδης* (which he contrasts with *ὁ μυθευόμενος*) *ὁ τοῦ μοχθηροῦ βίος ἐστίν.*—PHILO.

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a. The word means Valley of Hinnom, or, as it is sometimes called, of the son or sons of Hinnom.

b. The Valley of Hinnom is mentioned thirteen times in the Old Testament.

c. In no one of those thirteen passages does it mean "hell."

Five times it is used of a valley outside Jerusalem which in ancient days had been, and in subsequent ages again became, "the pleasant valley of Hinnom" (Josh. xv. 8, *bis;* xviii. 16, *bis;* Nehem. xi. 30).

Three times it is mentioned as having been defiled by the burning of human beings alive in the Moloch worship of Ahaz and Manasseh (2 Chron. xxviii. 3; xxxiii. 6; 2 Kings, xxiii. 10).

Five times in connection with God's wrath against the abomination of cruelly burning human beings, and especially infants, with fire; of which He expresses His abhorrence as a thing "which never came into His mind" (Jer. vii. 31, 32; xix. 1–15; xxxii. 35). In two of these passages it is spoken of as a place of carcases.[1]

d. In the New Testament Gehenna is alluded to by our Lord seven times in St. Matthew (v. 22, 29, 30; x. 28; xviii. 9; xxiii. 15, 33); three times in St. Mark; once in St. Luke (xii. 5); once in St. James (iii. 6). In not one of these passages is it called "endless." The only possible inducement to attach such a notion to it is the addition in Mark ix. 43 of "the quenchless fire and deathless worm," expressions purely metaphorical and directly borrowed from a metaphor of Isaiah respecting earthly consequences. Seven of the ten allusions to Gehenna come out of one single passage of one single discourse (Matt. v. repeated partly in Matt. xviii., Mark ix.), and it is

[1] It *may* be alluded to in Is. xxx. 33, as a place where the bodies of the Assyrians were to be burnt; but "Topheth" may there mean merely "a burning-place," or place for funeral pyres. The word Gehenna does not occur in the Apocrypha.

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extremely questionable whether in all seven the primary allusion is not to an earthly Jewish punishment.[1]

The other references are of the most general description. The word does not occur once in all the thirteen Epistles of St. Paul, and Hades only once, though he had declared to his converts "the whole counsel of God." Nor does it occur once in the pages of him who leaned on the Lord's bosom; nor in the Epistle to the Hebrews; nor in the Epistles of the Chief of the Apostles.

Origen, one of the few Fathers who studied Hebrew for the express purpose of interpreting Scripture, tells us that he had found by inquiry what the Jews really meant by Gehenna; and that Celsus and

[1] Thus Schleusner, *s.v.* **Γέεννα** (though he holds the old views), says that it also meant "quaevis gravissimae poenae et maxime contumeliosa mortis genera." He renders "a son of Gehenna" (Matt. xxiii. 15), by "worthy of the severest punishments"; and "shall be liable to the Gehenna of fire" (Matt. v. 22), by "worthy of a disgraceful death." The ordinary account of Gehenna as a place defiled by Moloch worship, then made the common cesspool of the city, and purified by huge fires, appears to rest solely on the authority of Rabbi David Kimchi on 2 Kings xxiii. 10 and Ps. xxvii. 13, and Rabbi Elias in *Thishbi*, f. 14, 2 (Stehelin, ii. 31). It is at least open to question whether the metaphorical meaning of the name may not have been derived from some gaseous exhalation which led many to imagine that in that valley lay one of the "mouths of hell." The current belief that Gehenna, in common Jewish opinion, ended in annihilation for the worst offenders, was pointed out long ago by Bentley, in the first sermon of his Boyle Lectures. He says that the learnedest doctors among the Jews "have esteemed it (*extinction*) the most dreadful of all punishments, and have assigned it for the portion of the blackest criminals of the damned, so interpreting Tophet, Abaddon, &c., for final extinction and deprivation of living." For a full account of all that can be learnt about the origin of the name Gehenna, &c., see Böttcher, *De Inferis*, pp. 81-85; Carpzov, *Apparat. Crit.* p 484, *sq.*; Glass, *Philolog. Sacr.* p. 806, *sq.* It is at least a possible conjecture that the name means "the valley of wailing." Its seven names (Jon. ii. 2; Ps. lxxxviii. 11; xvi. 2; xl. 2; cvii. 14, &c.) are mentioned in *Eruvin*, f. 19, 1. The notion of *refrigeria* (see *supra*, p. 282) and progressive mitigation is clearly expressed in the Talmud, *Jalkuth Tehillin*, 84 (Hershon's *Talmudic Miscellany*, p. 313). "Rabbi Jochanan said the praises of God which ascend from Gehenna are more than those which ascend from Paradise."

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others (like most men now) talked of it with no knowledge of its real significance. Besides its primary meaning of the Valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem, it had come, he said, to acquire the secondary meaning of a purificatory punishment. There he stops short with a mysterious remark that "he does not think it wise to dwell any further on his discoveries." It is impossible to doubt that he had discovered that normally the Jews did not apply the word to an endless but to a terminable punishment—terminable partly by deliverance from it, partly by extinction of sentient life. It was in accordance with Origen's avowed use of "oeconomy" in treating of the subject, that in a popular book he should have kept his discovery in the background. Then, as now, there were men who regarded popular misconceptions as too useful to correct.[1]

Here then are three words of which the first and commonest (Sheol, Hades) does not necessarily imply a place of punishment at all; and of which all three are demonstrably used to describe an intermediate and normally terminable condition. And yet they are indiscriminately rendered by one word which is normally taken to mean endless torture in material flames!

Well may the Bishop of Chester[2] remark that "the confusion of Hades with Gehenna," as well as the change of meaning in the word "damnation," "must be allowed to go some way towards justifying a desire for further revision."

"Still greater misunderstanding arises," says the Bishop of Durham, "from translating Hades, the place of departed spirits, and Gehenna, the place of fire and torment, by the same word hell, and thus confusing two ideas wholly distinct. In such passages as Acts ii. 27, 31, the misconception thus created is very serious."[3]

[1] Orig. *c. Cels.* vi. 25. [2] *Charge*, p. 30. [3] *On Revision*, p. 79.

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"We find the Roman Catholic hell," says Dr. Ernest Petavel, "still filled with the tortures belonging to a barbarous age,—red-hot gridirons, boiling cauldrons of lead and brimstone, a pestilential atmosphere, and a multitude of horned and cloven-footed demons, who . . . . pursue the damned, inflicting upon them untold torments . . . . We have rejected these monstrous fables, but have unfortunately preserved a word which recalls them and which confuses the popular imagination by its constant misuse. It is the word hell, which the sacred writers *never* use in the sense which is generally given to it."[1]

That a word so misleading should still be retained in the Revised Version is an error which I cannot but fear that another generation will severely censure. Quite apart from controversy, it seems to me perfectly indefensible to render a word, of which it is to the last degree important that we should form a right conception, by another word of which the equivalence is even disputable. I say this not as a matter of doctrine, but as a matter of criticism. Even for us who believe that souls may pass into endless loss, the word hell is irrevocably mingled with masses of false, superstitious, and unscriptural fancies. Our revisers, by seeming to sanction the error that the words Gehenna and Hell are accurate equivalents, perpetuate misconceptions which are more dangerous than any others to the general acceptance of the Gospel of Christ. If they had rendered "Gehenna" by "Gehenna" they would have been responsible for nothing. They would have followed a divine and unerring example. It cannot be otherwise than dangerous to diverge from the example which made the Apostles and our blessed Lord Himself keep a Hebrew technical term in its Hebrew technical form.[2]

(3) Still more unfortunate and misleading is the

[1] *The Struggle for Eternal Life*, p. 20. [2] See *supra*, pp. 184, 215.

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variant rendering of *aionios*, now by "eternal," now by "everlasting."

It must be indeed a hopeless prejudice—a blindness which can be regarded as little short of penal—which refuses to see that *aionios* does not necessarily mean endless.

Aion, Hebrew *olam*, means properly "an age," an indefinite period, long or short. The phrases which are asserted to imply endlessness are again and again used of things which have long since ceased to be.[1] If *aion* meant "eternity," how came it to have a plural (*αἰῶνες*, *olamim*)?[2] and how came the Jews to talk of "for ever and beyond"? The latter expression alone was decisive to the clear mind of Origen. He says that the authority of Holy Scripture taught him that the word rendered "eternity" meant "limited duration. [3]

Since *aion* meant "an age," *aionios* means properly "belonging to an age," or "age long"; and any one who asserts that it must always mean "endless" defends a position which even Augustine practically abandoned twelve centuries ago.[4] Even if *aion* always meant "eternity"—which is not the case either in classic or Hellenistic Greek—*aionios* could

[1] The Passover sprinkling, Ex. xii. 24; the Aaronic priesthood, &c., Ex. xxix. 9; xxxii. 13; xl. 15; Lev. iii. 17; Num. xviii. 19; the inheritance of Caleb, Josh. xiv. 9; Solomon's temple, 1 Kings viii. 12, 13; the smoke of Edom, Is. xxxiv. 9, 10. (Comp. Gen. xvii. 8; xlix. 26; 2 Sam. vii. 16; Deut. xiii. 16; xv. 17; 2 Kings v. 27; xxi. 7; 1 Chr. xxviii. 4.) To take but one or two books, combinations of Olam (which is rendered by *αἰών* 439 times in the LXX.) occur in Exodus at least twelve times out of fourteen of things which have passed away; in Leviticus twenty-four times, always of things which have come to an end; in Numbers ten times; in Deuteronomy about ten times out of twelve; and so on throughout the Old Testament. If the word were used but once in a finite sense it would be enough, but the fact is that it is so used repeatedly, and more often than not.

[2] This plural occurs thirteen times.

[3] Orig. *De Princip.* ii. 3, § 5.

[4] Gen. ix. 12; xvii. 8; xlviii. 4; xlix. 26; Num. xxv. 13; Lev. iii. 17; xvi. 34; Hab. iii. 6, &c.

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still only mean "*belonging to eternity*," not "*lasting through it.*" *Aionios* does not even mean "endless within the sphere of its own existence." For in Deut. xxiii. 3 "for ever" is distinctly made an equivalent to "even to their tenth generation." So again in Is. lx. 15, "I will make thee an aeonian excellency," is explained in the next clause by "a joy of many generations"; and in Lam. v. 19 "for ever and ever" is the equivalent of "from generation to generation." And though any further instances are superfluous, in Is. xxxii. 14 we read, "The forts and towers shall be dens *for ever, until* the Spirit be poured upon us. . . . Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness." Are we to believe that the Kings of Babylon "shall sleep an endless sleep, and shall not awake"? (Jer. li. 39-57).

The word *by itself*—whether adjective or substantive—*never* means endless. If such were its meaning, or that of its Hebrew equivalent, the Jews would have been perfectly justified in rejecting the Christian religion which proclaimed the annulment of ordinances which in their law they had again and again been told were to be "eternal" and "for ever." If they could have established that meaning of the word they would have had an unanswerable argument against Christianity. *Aionios* may in some instances *connote* endlessness, because it catches something of its colour from the words to which it is joined; just as the word "indefinite" might catch the sense of "infinite"· if, in speaking of things which for other reasons I knew to be infinite in duration, I spoke of them as being "of indefinite duration." It is a word which, like many other adjectives, shines simply "by reflected light."

Josephus shows that *aionios* did not necessarily mean endless. He applies the epithet to the period between the giving of the law and his own writing; and to the imprisonment of the tyrant John by the

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Romans; and to Herod's Temple, which was already destroyed when he wrote. And when he wants to assimilate Jewish theology to Greek teaching, he is so well aware that *aionios* will not convey his meaning, that he purposely uses instead the word *aidios*, and employs no less than four expressions, of which every one is alike unknown to the Old Testament and the New—namely, "endless prison," "endless vengeance," "incessant vengeance," and "immortal vengeance."[1] As for the usage of Philo, there could not be a better authority than his editor, Dr. Mangey, who says that he never used *aionios* for endless duration.

The Greek Fathers were well aware of these facts:—

a. Thus St. Gregory of Nyssa speaks of *aionion diastema:* "an aeonian interval."[2] Here the meaning "endless" introduces positive absurdity.[3]

b. Leontius of Byzantium, even in arguing against Universalists, admits that *aion* is used of a definite period. He says that Origenists argued from the finite use of *aion*, that "aeonian correction" must be terminable.[4]

c. St. Chrysostom, in his Homily on Eph. ii. 1-3, says that "Satan's kingdom is *aeonian*—that is, will cease with this present world." Here in the Oxford Library of the Fathers the word *aionios* is rendered "secular." If, in his homily on 2 Thess. i. 9, 10, he uses the word to show that the "destruction" is not temporal, this is a part of the inconsistency which seems to attach to all the utterances of the Fathers on this subject, but which does not at all shake the force of his previous admission.

[1] *εἰργμὸς ἀΐδιος, ἀΐδιος, ἀδιάλειπτος, ἀθάνατος τιμωρία.*

[2] *Opp.* ii. 650.

[3] See Bennet, *Olam Haneshamoth*, pp. 381-419, "On the opinion of the Greek and Latin Fathers with respect to the Intermediate State," &c. (1800).

[4] *ὅτι τὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ὄνομα περὶ ὡρισμένου χρόνου λέγεται.*—LEONT. BYZ. I have quoted the rest of the passage, *infra*, p. 400.

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d. Justinian, in his virulent letter to the Patriarch Mennas, evidently avoids the exclusive use of the word, because he felt that it was so indecisive, and uses instead the unscriptural *ateleutetos aionios* for "life," and *ateleutetos* for "punishment."

e. And—in spite of Dr. Pusey's assertion that "there must be some mistake here"—I repeat that the author of the spurious dialogues which pass under the name of Caesarius, the brother of St. Gregory of Nyssa, points out that the Universalists derived one of their very arguments as to the terminability of future punishment from its being only called *aionion*.[1] The reader can judge for himself. Dr. Pusey says, "No Greek could have so argued." That they did so argue is abundantly clear from the fact, which I have now proved, that so many eminent Greek Fathers leaned to Universalism, although they freely used the word *aionios* of future punishment. Sometimes they do not even shrink from the stronger word *aidios*, because they know that such words are often used in a vague rhetorical way, just as the Hebrew "for ever" is used without the writer even dreaming of the abstract conception of absolute endlessness. It has been repeatedly argued that *aionios* must mean "endless," because it is applied to God. The futility of the argument may be exposed by one of hundreds of instances. In Is. lxii. 12, *Olam* (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα) is applied to God's everlasting name; yet in Deut. xv. 17 the very same expressions are applied to the lifetime of a slave.

Further, the Greek Fathers could not have failed to attach deep significance to a fact which, owing to

[1] Huet, *Origeniana*, *Opp. Orig.* iv. 231, 233 (ed. Paris).

[2] The Pseudo-Caesarius says that they argued ἐκ τοῦ αἰώνιον μόνον φῆσαι Κύριον τὸ κολαστήριον πῦρ καὶ οὐκ αἰώνιον αἰώνων. The impossible Greek of the two last words obviously arises from some mere homoeoteleuton or other clerical error; for I have shown above in the extracts from Origen and Leontius that the Origenists did use an argument of this kind.

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the unfortunate inaccuracy of rendering *aionios* by "everlasting," escapes the notice of English readers altogether. That fact is that in no single instance is unmistakable and indisputable endlessness predicated in Scripture of future punishment. A remarkable illustration of this fact may be found in the autobiography of an American divine—the Rev. Dr. Theodore Clapp.[1] He had just been preaching at New Orleans a zealous sermon on endless torments, when a judge in the congregation, who was an eminent scholar, and who had abandoned an original destination for the ministry from his inability to find this doctrine clearly revealed in Scripture, asked the preacher to furnish him with a list of texts in Hebrew and Greek to prove the doctrine which he had been preaching. Dr. Clapp proceeds to give a detailed account of his studies. Carefully reading through the whole of the Old Testament in Hebrew, he was unable to find the doctrine which he sought, or even to find in Hebrew a word at all corresponding to "hell" as a place of future punishment; and he found (he says) that orthodox critics of the greatest celebrity were perfectly familiar with these facts. Confessing to the judge that he could not find in the Hebrew Old Testament the text he sought, he still turned with perfect confidence to the New; but after a study of eight years was compelled by his conscience to admit that he could not find a single text in the Greek Testament which, when fairly interpreted, affirms the endless misery of any human souls. He ends his account by the remark that he was led to repudiate the dogma by the Bible only, in spite of all the concurrent prejudices of his early life, parental teaching, and the influence of school, college, theological seminary, and professional caste. Others, following

[1] See *The Theology of the Bible*, by Chancellor Halsted, p. 626. Similarly it was by an exclusive study of the Bible that Mr. Jukes was led to his view of Restitution.

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the same course, might arrive at a different conclusion; but such a story from the life of an honest man is one more indication of the fact which is supported by a mass of evidence in all ages, that the popular views are by no means revealed with that indisputable distinctness and definiteness which has been asserted for them by the self-confidence of a purely assertive dogmatism.

Now there are many adjectives, and many phrases, any one of which might have been used by any one of the Apostles and Evangelists, or by our Lord Himself, which would have rendered any question on the subject impossible to those who accept the arbitrament of Scripture. Those adjectives and expressions are used again and again by the later writers who *do* mean to call future punishment "endless" for all. The idea could be expressed with the utmost ease and simplicity either in Hebrew or in Greek in a hundred different and indisputable ways. Yet not one of those decisive adjectives, not one of those indisputable phrases, is once applied to Hades or Gehenna. Those who make much of the silence of Scripture as being often highly significant are bound in common honesty to consider this fact.

The assertion that "if the expressions used in the Bible for future retribution do not express endlessness, no possible expression could have been found which would have been adequate to do so," is an assertion which can only be due to the blindest prejudice. It is at any rate most astonishingly false.

A scholar like Mr. Oxenham should not have asked "whether, if Christ had intended to teach the doctrine of eternal [he means "endless"] punishment, He could possibly have taught it in plainer terms?"[1] The answer is that He could have taught it in scores of terms not only more plain, but absolutely indisput-

[1] Review of Mr. Jukes in the *Christian Apologist*, ii. 103.

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able. The absence of such terms, when compared with their existence elsewhere, is very striking.

It is somewhat sad to find Dr. Angus putting forth such a statement as that "Every form of words employed in Scripture to describe everlastingness, our Lord and His Apostles employ to describe the state of those who die in sin and disbelief."

If controversialists are content to rely on such assertions as this their views are doomed to the speedy extinction which awaits *wilful* error. Has not Dr. Angus so much as read in the Septuagint many expressions applied to God far stronger than, throughout the whole Bible, are ever applied to punishment or to evil?[1]

For one of the strongest arguments against that final doom, the possibility of which for absolutely hardened sinners I do not deny, is derived from the very fact that the doctrine is *not* taught with the clearness which we should have expected if a view so terrible were a matter of essential faith. It is too often supported, as Athanase Coquerel says, by "trifles of criticism and variations of rendering." It is still more often supported in what I consider the worst way of all, namely, by the bald assertion that all who deny it teach contrary to our Lord's express words. This style of assertion shows an utter indifference to argument. Thousands of learned and holy men before Origen, and since, would have accepted the doctrine without reserve, if they had not been convinced that our Lord's words were not decisive, and that they have been misunderstood. The words of our Lord do on the whole render it impossible for me to be an Universalist, but common honesty and reverence for truth prevent me from

[1] For instance, *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ ἐπέκεινα*, Mic. iv. 5; *ἀπ' αἰῶνος καὶ ἐὡς αἰῶνος*, 1 Chr. xxix. 10; *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ ἔτι*, Dan. xii. 3; *τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ ἐπ' αἰῶνα καὶ ἔτι*, Ex. xv. 18; *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος*, Ps. ix. 40, &c. &c.

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asserting the infallibility of my own interpretation of them.

For, if we had so much as once been told in the Bible that Gehenna, or that punishment, is *ateleutetos*, or *aperantos*, or *aidios*, or *adialeiptos*, or that the life in such punishment should be *aphthartos*, there would have been no dispute as to the literal meaning of such words. Josephus and some Christian writers, when they want to speak of endless retribution, do use such words.

Our Lord and the Apostles might again have spoken of men as bound in chains which can never be loosed (*akatalutos*). Or they might have said of evil, as they have said of good,—that it would last "through all the aeons," or through "all the generations of the aeons," and even to "the ends of the aeons."[1] Any one out of many Greek phrases would have sufficed them to express the meaning which they have never once expressed so unambiguously as to make even Universalism an impossible hope in the minds of Christians. Such phrases *have* been used by multitudes of Christian writers in later ages; but they are not found in Holy Writ.

And while Scripture nowhere says that evil will last through all the ages, it uses some expressions which seem distinctly to imply the reverse. While therefore we may be unable to affirm that all evil *will* have an end, we think it unwise to assert, as a distinct article of faith, that it will *not*.

The pages of theologians in all ages show a startling prevalence of such terms as "everlasting death," "everlasting damnation," "endless torments," "everlasting vengeance," "everlasting fire." One might

[1] 1 Cor. x. 11, Eph. iii. 26; comp. Ps. cxlv. 13, Is. li. 6-8. "An aeon may come to an end; aeons of aeons may come to an end. Only that which lasts through all the aeons is without an end. And Scripture affirms this only of the Kingdom of God. The absolute eternity of evil is nowhere affirmed."—DR. CLEMANCE, *Future Punishment*, p. 86.

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have supposed that the Bible was full of these expressions. But what are the facts?

In my view of the meaning of *aionios* not one of these expressions has any Scriptural authority. But further,—

I. "*Everlasting death*," though used in our Liturgy, is a phrase quite unknown to the Scriptures. They never speak even of aeonian death, often as they speak of aeonian life.

II. "*Everlasting damnation*" is a mistranslation of "aeonian judgment." It occurs *but once* in Heb. vi. 2. In Mark iii. 29, it is in all probability a misreading for "aeonian sin."

III. "*Everlasting fire*" is "aeonian fire." It occurs once in Jude (verse 7) of the earthly and temporary fire which destroyed the Cities of the Plain; and twice in St. Matthew, once in a parable, and both times as an equivalent for the vague Hebrew *le-olam*. In the Gospels it is the "fire not of earth," the "spiritual" fire of God's wrath against obstinate wickedness.

IV. "*Everlasting punishment*" is "aeonian correction"—"correction in the world to come."

V. "*Everlasting vengeance*," so far from being an inspired expression, has no Scriptural parallel whatever. It comes first from the *athanatos timoria* in the Graecised misrepresentation of Jewish eschatology by Josephus; and, afterwards, in some of the Fathers.

VI. "*Endless torments*" is an expression for which there is not one iota of direct Scriptural authority.

Is a doctrine of such stupendous horror to be made to rest on this extremely rare occurrence[1] of an adjective which scores of times has not the meaning thus attributed to it? And is this meaning to be

[1] *αἰώνιον πῦρ*, Matt. xviii. 8; xxv. 41; Jude 7.
αἰώνιος κόλασις, Matt. xxv. 46.
αἰώνιον ἁμάρτημα, Mark iii. 29. *αἰώνιον κρίμα*, Heb. vi. 2.
No such combination occurs even once in the Gospel or Epistles of St. John; or in the Gospel or Acts of St. Luke; or in all the thirteen Epistles of St. Paul (see *infra*, p. 465); or in either of the Epistles of

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given to it in spite of the fact that the doctrine, if it had been intended, could have been expressed, without a shadow of ambiguity, by at least ten or twelve other expressions known to and used by the sacred writers, but never once applied by them to the duration of evil or of future retribution?

"Endless," says the laborious author of *Eternity, a Concordance of Texts*,[1] "a word so often employed by men with reference to things eternal, does not occur in the Old Testament, and twice only in the New Testament, where it is the representative (not of *aionios*, but) of two very different Greek words, neither of which are used elsewhere in the New Testament." These two words are *akatalutos*[2] ("endless genealogies," 1 Tim. i. 4) and *aperantos* ("the power of an endless life," Heb. vii. 16).

The simple and unmistakable words "immortal" (*athanatos, aphthartos*)[3] and "immortality" (*athanasia, aphtharsia*) are never predicated of sinners.[4]

There are other words to imply "endlessness" which occur in the Septuagint, and not in the New Testament, such as *aenaos*. But so little had the ancients faced the abstract idea of "endlessness" that even this word is applied equally to God (Deut. xxxiii. 27) and to the hills (Gen. xlix. 26).

The expression *Leolam vaed* ("for ever and beyond") occurs fifteen times in the Old Testament. Even this phrase is used in a perfectly general sense;—but why is it not once predicated of future punishment?

St. Peter; or in St. James; or even in the Revelation. In our Lord's ministry, the phrase occurred but incidentally in two discourses, that recorded in Matt. xviii. 8, Mark ix. 43, and that in Matt. xxv.

[1] Published by Messrs. Bagster, 1879.

[2] Even this word is purely metaphorical. Though the word means "endless," it is used in a loose, popular sense for "long and tedious."

[3] ἄφθαρτος only in Rom. i. 23; 1 Cor. ix. 25; xv. 52; 1 Tim. i. 17; 1 Pet. i. 4, 23; iii. 4, always of God or of heavenly things.

[4] ἀθανασία only in 1 Cor. xv. 53, 54; 1 Tim. vi. 16; ἀφθαρσία only in Rom. ii. 7; 1 Cor. xv. 42, 50, 53, 54; 2 Tim. i. 10 (in Eph. vi. 24 and Tit. ii. 7 it is "sincerity").

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There are two very simple adverbs in the New Testament, either of which would have been regarded as decisive. One is *aei*, "always." It occurs eight times in the New Testament, but not once of future punishment. The other is *pantote*, which also occurs eight times, but not once of future punishment.

The strong phrase "to the uttermost" (*eis to panteles*, Heb. vii. 25) occurs once. It is applied to salvation, not to condemnation.

Again, the strong phrase "for perpetuity" (*eis to dienekes*) occurs twice in the New Testament (Heb. x. 12, 14) of God, and of final sanctification. It is never used of future punishment.

Once more we are told that the glory of Christ shall last "to all the ages" (εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας, Jude 25). Had such an expression been applied, even so much as once, to the dominion of evil, it would have been regarded as decisive. But it is not so applied,—not even by St. Jude.

A large number of other Greek phrases[1] would have served equally well to express "endlessness," if such had been the meaning which the word *aionios* was intended to convey. How is it that they are not used? How is it that the adjective employed is one which is far more frequently used of things not endless, but terminable? Why are the other and far stronger and clearer adjectives only employed in other combinations?[2] If the dreadful tenet were as indisputable and as essential as its supporters assert, why did not any of the Prophets, or our Blessed Lord, or any one of His Apostles and Evangelists preclude all controversy on the subject by any single statement such as would have been conveyed in the very simple every-day words that future punishment would last *es aei* or *aneu telous?*

[1] Such, for instance, as various combinations of οὐδέ, Matt. xxiv. 21.

[2] *Aidios* of God in Rom. i. 20; but even this word of a temporary fire in Jude 6.

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Let none imagine that such facts will be set aside at their bidding and on their assertion. They may be—and will be—distorted, and ignored, and sophisticated, and explained away; but they will remain unshaken, because they are indisputable.

The Jews had never faced the abstract conception of "endlessness." It is a conception beyond our finite grasp. It may involve a sort of absurdity. For, as Professor Challis says, "The difficulty concerning the duration of future punishment appears to be attributable to a preconception tacitly, perhaps unconsciously, entertained by most persons that time and space have an independent existence, although the teaching of Scripture is directly opposed to this view. . . . May we not conclude that eternal life and eternal punishment terminate alike with the end of time, and that, in the consummation of all things both are merged in indissoluble life [ζωὴ ἀκατάλυτος, Heb. vii. 16], that God may be all in all?"[1]

The Greek Fathers were so well aware of these facts that they attached no importance to the stock sophism which has been repeated so often since the days of St. Augustine—that because *aionios zoe* means "endless life" (which is not true), therefore *aionios kolasis* must mean "endless punishment" (which does not follow).[2] Such an argument would have seemed altogether idle to an Origen, a Gregory of Nyssa, or a Theodore. They believed and said that punishment was "aeonian"; they did not believe it to be "endless." Even the Latin Fathers who had risen to a competent knowledge of Greek and had not become quite stereotyped in prejudice were aware that there

[1] *Scriptural Doctrine of Immortality*, pp. 127-132.

[2] *De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 23. The argument is worthy of its companion argument, that our only security of bliss rests on the punishment of the wicked being "endless," because otherwise our bliss might not be "endless." If the saints had not traditionally repeated such an argument, I should have thought that no Christian—who realised what he was saying—could, without a blush, have used a plea so ignobly selfish.

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was no real force in such a position. They were also aware that *aeternus* was used in just the same loose way—for "an indefinite period"—in Latin writers, as *aionios* was in Greek.[1]

This was the cause of Jerome's inconsistencies; and even Augustine was so well aware (when the spirit of system allowed him to think of the matter) that *aionios* is not a word of precision—that though he defines "the paying of the last farthing" to be "eternal punishment," he says that he does not thereby mean "to prevent a more careful inquiry about the punishments of sinners, *in what sense they are in Scripture called eternal*;—although in any case they should be avoided rather than known."[2] The Augustinian argument, in which he practically contradicts his own admissions, would have been dead and buried long ago were it not that "words often repeated react on the mind of the speaker, and at last ossify the very organs of intelligence."

If even a single passage could be adduced in which *aionios* does not mean endless we should be justified in rejecting that meaning in any connexion which bound us to conceptions such as those popularly current concerning the torments of "Hell." But the New Testament writers borrow the word *aionios* from the Septuagint, and no amount of argument can alter the fact that "of the ninety widely different subjects to which the Scriptures apply terms which occasionally take the sense of endlessness, in seventy instances they are confessedly of a limited and temporary nature."[3]

[1] *e.g.* "Aeterna civica bella."—OVID, *Pont.* ii. 126. So we say, "It will be an endless business"; "This led to endless trouble," &c.

[2] "Neque hoc dixerim ut diligentiorem tractationem videar ademisse de poenis peccatorum, quomodo in Scripturis dicuntur aeternae, quamquam quolibet modo vitandae sunt potius quam sciendae."—AUG. in *Matt.* xxv. 26.

[3] White, *Life in Christ*, p. 397.

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It is no answer whatever to say with Dr. Pusey that of the seventy-one times in which the word is used in the New Testament, it is always applied to things which are endless. For,

(1) In the first place this is simply to beg the question—it is to assert what is denied. Though *aionios* is often applied as an epithet to endless things, that conjunction no more makes the word *mean* endless than the fact that it is applied to spiritual things makes the word necessarily mean spiritual.

And (2) our contention is (*a*) that in not one of the seventy-one passages does the word mean "endless," and (*β*) that in some of them no ingenuity can succeed in attaching such a meaning to it, since it is applied to ages which have already come to an end. In Rom. xvi. 25 the "aeonian times" are now ended by the proclamation of the mystery. In 2 Tim. i. 10, the aeonian times cannot begin to be "endless," any more than they can in Tit. i. 2. In Philem. 15, the "aeonian" relation between Philemon and his slave either means (as in Deut. xv. 17) a relation for their common lifetime, or that the old temporal relation was replaced by a spiritual bond. In Luke i. 70, and Acts iii. 21, prophets have not been prophesying "for ever." In Jude 7, the "aeonian fire" is the sulphurous storm, which in a single day destroyed the Cities of the Plain. In Mark iii. 29, "aeonian sin" does not mean "endless sin," but sin of which the effects shall continue in the world to come.

(3) And in the third place it would be perfectly admissible to say that even if *aionios* implied "endlessness" when attached to words which express things in accordance with the nature of God, it by no means follows that it would have the same meaning when attached to things which are alien from, and antagonistic to, His nature. If "life" or "future bliss" came to an end, that would come to an end which Christ died to secure for all mankind; if evil

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came to an end that would come to an end which Christ died expressly to destroy.[1]

(4) Moreover here are two distinct passages in which *aionios* occurs in two consecutive clauses, and in one of those clauses connotes endlessness, and yet in the other is used of things which have already come to an end, or soon shall come to an end.

a. One is Habakkuk iii. 6.

"The everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow; His ways are everlasting." Here God's ways are, in the strictest meaning of the word, "everlasting and endless"; but to say that the hills are "everlasting" and "endless," is to contradict the plain words of Scripture. Even in English it is as gratuitous to explain the vague word "everlasting" of literal "endlessness," as to insist that the "pit" is literally "bottomless," because it is so called nine times in the Book of Revelation. The one word is simply expressive of indefinite time, the other of indefinite space.

Here, then, is one instance from the Old Testament which would alone be sufficient to overthrow what I called the battered and aged argument of St. Augustine, about the supposed "absurdity" of making *aionios zoe* mean "endless life," and yet not making *aionios kolasis* mean necessarily "endless punishment."[2]

[1] See Dr. Clemance, p. 65.

[2] Bishop Wordsworth, echoing this exploded "argument," says: "Hence it may be inferred that the misery of the one and the joy of the other will be co-extensive in duration. Now this appears to be taught by other places of Holy Scripture."—*Duration, &c., of Future Punishment*, p. 15. The only answer is that a Christian is not bound to accept so precarious an *inference* as adequate foundation for an immense and startling dogma; and that to many "it does not appear to be taught" by other passages of Scripture, but to be contradicted by them. He adds: "And when the contrary opinion was broached by Origen, the universal Church of Christ condemned it as heretical." I have shown that it was broached long before Origen, and that the universal Church of Christ never has condemned this opinion as heretical at all, but on the contrary has (among others) canonised

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β. And here is a second instance, from the New Testament.—Rom. xvi. 25.

"According to the revelation of the mystery which was kept hushed from the 'eternal' times (*χρόνοις αἰωνίοις*), but now is made manifest . . . according to the commandment of the eternal God (*τοῦ αἰωνίου Θεοῦ*)."

Now here, according to the triumphant argument of St. Augustine and the host of followers who cite his false logic, it would be *multum absurdum* to make *aionios* mean "endless" in one clause and yet not make it mean "endless" in the other. Yet in the other, so far from meaning "endless," it is expressly applied *to times which have now come to an end;* and "in aeonian times" simply means, as Theodoret says, "long ago."

(5) I will give one more instance which ought sufficiently to prove that "eternal fire" does not necessarily mean "endless fire." In Jude 7 we are told that Sodom "is set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." The "eternal fire" is the fire of God's wrath which destroyed Sodom; and yet if we make it mean "endless torments," this ignorant method of wresting general expressions is at once confuted by Ezek. xvi. 53—55, where we are expressly told that God would bring back the captivity of Sodom, and that Sodom, as well as one who had sinned more grievously than Sodom, would return to her former state.

The force of such arguments is unmistakable. When Dr. Pusey says of Rom. xvi. 25, that St. Paul

"the Theologian," and "the Father of Fathers," both of whom held it. And so far from condemning the opinion "when it was broached by Origen," it held four general oecumenical councils, and any number of synods, after Origen's death, without condemning him or his theory of Restitution (which was far wider than Universalism); and if it ever condemned that opinion at all—which I have shown to be in the very highest degree doubtful—did not do so till three centuries after Origen's death.

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here "places us altogether (so to speak) in the Being of God," and "speaks of the eternal purpose of God," he says what is quite true; but he is then practically taking refuge in vague phrases, and absolutely giving up all his previous arguments that *aionios* must mean *endless*.

(6) But even if we could produce no such demonstrative instances, it would have been enough to say, and we have already said, that good and evil are not *in pari materiâ*. "I profoundly believe," says De Quincey, "that the Scriptures ascribe absolute and metaphysical eternity to one sole being, viz. God. . . . Having anchorage in God, innumerable entities may possibly be admitted to a participation in the divine *aion*. But what interest in the favour of God can belong to falsehood, to malignity, to impurity? To invest them with aionian privileges is in effect and by its results to distrust and insult the Deity. Evil would not be evil if it had that power of self-subsistence which is imparted to it in supposing its aionian life to be co-eternal with that which crowns and glorifies the good."

(7) In point of fact the word "spiritual" conveys a much nearer approximation to the New Testament usage of *aionios* (at any rate as St. John and St. Paul use it) than either "everlasting" or "endless." And for this reason. The Jews divided all time into the *olam hazzeh*, or present age, aeon, or dispensation; and the *olam habba*, or future age, aeon, or dispensation. Their applications of the latter phrase differ, and we have similar differences in the Greek equivalents of these phrases. But *aionios* is predominently used in the New Testament of that which belongs to the future aeon—the unseen—"the eternal"—without any prominence being given, or even any reference made, to the notion of endlessness. To render "the aeonian God" by the "endless God" would rightly sound shocking to us. It means the

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God whom no man hath seen or can see[1]; the God into whose presence we shall pass in the future life. The word is a favourite one with St. John, who uses it twenty-three times of "life," as St. Paul also uses it twenty-one times. Now it might have been assumed that neither St. John nor St. Paul meant by this merely "endless life," seeing that it is assumed that we shall *all* live endlessly. The meaning of the word in both these great Apostles is purely qualitative, the blessed life of the world to come. This is the phrase used by the Peshito version to render *kolasis aionios* —the "punishment of the world to come." The epithet expresses the *character* of the life, not its *duration*, if indeed duration can at all rightly be predicated of "the eternal now."

To give the meaning of "endless" to this word is, in many passages, simply impossible; in others it is only possible at the expense of altogether lowering the conception. "The eternal," says Canon Westcott, "is revealed as the present, and life is laid open in all its possible nobility. The separation which men are inclined to make arbitrarily between the 'here' and the 'there' in spiritual things is done away."[2]

It is satisfactory to find that this is the view taken by Bennet in his grave and learned treatise *Olam Haneshamoth*.[3] In an elaborate examination of the word *olam* he concludes that it means "the hidden period." Thus when applied to God he makes it mean "the God of hidden duration," or "of the invisible world." He says that by being rendered "for ever, everlasting," &c., the true meaning is completely veiled, because in many places the word does not signify duration at all. Thus in Heb. viii. 5, "to the copy of the heavenly things," corresponds to *le-hukath*

[1] "I believe, as you do, that eternity has nothing to do with duration. . . . So eternal life is God's own life; it is essential life; and eternal punishment is the misery belonging to the nature of sin, and not coming from outward causes."—*Letters of Thomas Erskine*, p. 235.

[2] *St. John*, p. xxxix.

[3] *Olam*, pp. 50-70.

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olam. On the phrase "everlasting consolation" (*paraklesis aionios*), in 2 Thess. ii. 16, he argues that consolation is in its very nature an intermediate thing, and cannot apply to an endless state, but to the period between death and resurrection. He says that the term "eternal (aeonian) king" was understood by the Seventy and the Rabbis to indicate God's care over souls during the interval between death and the resurrection, which he calls the "shadow of the hand of God" (Is. li. 16).

Professor Maurice has often spoken to the same effect. In a sermon on 2 Cor. iv. 18, he said, "We often speak of time as a river, and of eternity as the ocean into which it flows . . . as though we were floating down the stream of time, and death first brought us into contact with eternity. The words of this text suggest a very different notion. St. Paul says that the things seen are temporal (*πρόσκαιρα*); the things unseen, eternal. He does not describe the one as present, the other as future. He does not tell us that here he is only among passing things, that hereafter he shall be among permanent things. He feels that he is in the midst of both here on this earth."

Let the reader consider the following passages :—

"He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life." John iii. 36.

"We are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ; this is the true God and eternal life." 1 John v. 20.

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life." John v. 39.

"Thou hast the words of eternal life." vi. 68.

"His commandment is eternal life." xii. 50.

"Ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." 1 John iii. 15.

If any one thinks that the substitution of "endless" for "eternal" or "aeonian" in these and other passages will express the meaning of St. John, I can only

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say that he is easily satisfied. But the latest and by far the profoundest commentator on St. John's Epistles —Eric Haupt—agrees in this matter with the latest and profoundest commentator on the Gospel—Canon Westcott. Dr. Haupt says, "At the outset it must be noted that 'eternal life' is not to St. John a mere term for unbroken continuance in being, as though it were simply equivalent to the indissoluble life (*zoe akatalutos*) of Heb. v. 6; that it does not define the form of this life so much as the nature and meaning of it; *zoe aionios* is, in other words, a description of divine life, of the life which is in God, and which by God is communicated."[1] And again, speaking on the verse, "Ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him," he says, "Here it is primarily obvious that *aeonian life has in it no thought of time, but is altogether an ethical idea or characteristic;* for if we would take it in the sense of 'endless life' (Heb. v. 6), it is clear that there would be a contradiction in terms."[2]

Nor do these eminent writers stand alone. "*Zoe aionios*," says Meyer, "signifies the eternal Messianic life, which the believer already possesses. . . . It is that moral and blessed life which is independent of death." "It is," says Lücke, "a present reality—a resurrection process prior to bodily death—the sum of Messianic blessedness—an existing life, not a life after death." Eternity consists, not in endlessness, but in knowing, seeing, and loving God. "Eternal life," says Erskine of Linlathen, "is living in the love of God; eternal death is living in self; so that a man may be in eternal life or in eternal death for ten minutes as he changes from one state to the other."

(8) But in point of fact all these authorities are needless, for St. Paul and St. John both define the sense in which they use the word "eternal." In both of them, so far from meaning "endless," the word is

[1] Haupt on 1 John i. 2. [2] *Id.* on 1 John iii. 15.

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almost the antithesis of "endless." "The things that are *unseen*," says St. Paul, "are eternal," not the things that are *future*. "Things eternal" are not things of "endless time," but things with which time has no connexion; not things which shall exist endlessly hereafter, but things which do exist now, only that they lie outside the world of sense. St. John gives a definition or indication of his usage exactly analogous to this. "This," he says, "is life eternal." What? To live endlessly? No! But "to know Thee the only God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." [1]

(9) "*Aeon*" is used in a similar spiritual and metaphysical sense. "*Aeon*," says Philo, "is the life of God, and is not time, but the archetype of time, and in it there is neither past, nor present, nor future." [2] "What to us is time," says St. Gregory of Nazianzus, "is to the immortals the aeon." (*Orat.* 38.) Indeed to degrade the word eternity to mean "endlessness," is not only to mistake, but to reverse its true character. Eternity is the timeless state; to make it a synonom of time endlessly prolonged is a conception as mean in philosophy as it is false theologically. "Eternity," says Tertullian, "has no time; it is itself all time." [3] "Eternity," says St. Thomas Aquinas, "has no succession, but exists altogether." [4] "The duration of eternity," says Bishop Pearson, "is completely indivisible and all at once." [5] "God," says Bishop Beveridge, "is Himself eternity. . . . Eternity without time." [6] "By eternity," says Spinoza, "I understand abstract existence." "I think," said Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, "eternal means essential in opposition to phenomenal."

[1] See accordant uses of the word in 1 Tim. i. 16; vi. 12; 2 Thess. ii. 16; Gal. vi. 8. (The spiritual life springs up as a harvest from sowing to the spirit.)
[2] Philo, *Opp.* i. 277, 619 (ed. Mangey).
[3] Tert. *c. Marc*, i. 8.
[4] St. Thom. Aquin. *Summa*, pt. i. qu. x. 1.
[5] Pearson, *Minor Theolog. Works.*
[6] Beveridge, *On the Articles*, p. 16.

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The word "eternal," if it could but be dissociated from the vulgar confusion which takes it to mean "endless," would be a very fitting translation for *aionios*. "Everlasting" is a translation which ought never to have been imposed upon us, and which now, it is hoped, will disappear. If taken literally it fixes a meaning upon a word in some places which the word cannot have in other places. It tends to render permanent an unwarrantable decision of a question which has again and again been successfully disputed. And it is after all a decision perfectly valueless, since no man is bound by the unscriptural word "everlasting," but only by the Scriptural word "eternal," or "aeonian." Let it be solemnly and reverently remembered that He who spake of "aeonian fire" used the same adjective, within a few hours, in senses which have no connection with time whatever.[1] In many instances the best-rendering of *zoe aionios* would be the expression of our Nicene Creed: "The life of the world to come." *Aionios* then, so far as it has any reference to duration at all, means, as Schleusner accurately says, "duration determined by the subject to which it is applied." But very often there is no direct reference whatever to duration. When the Fathers talked of the "Eternal Generation" of the Son, did they mean the "Endless Generation"?

Although it is hardly worth while to append authorities in proof of so obvious a fact as that *aionios* does not necessarily mean endless, I will add a few more. Some of them, be it observed, say that it *also*, in some places, means endless. But, in saying this, they are merely drawing inferences, and inferences which, so far as the word is concerned, they cannot prove. We have nothing to do with the indescribable confusion which they have caused by reading their own theology into words which do not contain

[1] John xvii. 3.

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it. If the word does not *necessarily* mean endless, any one has a perfect right to reject that meaning, and then so far as the argument from this word is concerned, the whole fabric of this terrible doctrine collapses and falls to the ground.[1] *Aion* ought always to be rendered by aeon or "age," and *aionios* by aeonian or "eternal," if only it be borne in mind that eternal and "endless" are two entirely different words.

ORIGEN.—"Quoties 'in saeculum' dicitur longitudo quidem temporis, sed esse finis aliquis indicatur, et quoties 'saeculum saeculorum' nominatur fortasse licet ignotus nobis tamen a Deo statutus finis indicatur."—*Hom.* vi. *in Exod.*

LEONTIUS OF BYZANTIUM.—The word aeon is in reality often used of a definite period, both by heathen and sacred writers (*καὶ παρὰ τοῖς ἔξω καὶ παρὰ τῇ γραφῇ*).

ST. JEROME.—"Et ultra non eris in sempiternum; sive, ut in Hebraeis *olam* et in Graeco *aion* scribitur, unum saeculum significat."—*In Ezek.* xxvi. *ad fin.*

IBN EZRA.—"*Leolam*, 'for ever,' merely means a long time, *i.e.* till the year of jubilee."—*On Ex.* xxi. 6.

OLYMPIODRUS.—"When *aionios* is used for a period which *by assumption* is infinite and unbounded, it means eternal; but when used in reference to time or things limited the sense is limited to this."

BISHOP HUET.—"Non simplici notione gaudet, nam modo finitum tempus, modo indefinitum, modo infinitum sonat."—*Origeniana*, p. 231.

JEREMY TAYLOR.—"Everlasting signifies only to the end of its own proper period."—*Works* iv. 43, *ed. Eden.*

[1] Rev. H. C. Calverley, Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, *Four Sermons*, p. 25. The weight of the authorities quoted is all the stronger because most of them are entangled in the common error. One or two of the following definitions are borrowed from the exhaustive little book, *Aion Aionios*, by the Rev. Dr. Hanson (Chicago, 1875).

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GROTIUS.—He explains "aeonian consolation" as "solatia piis medio tempore concessa, quae Hebraei vocant Nuach-Eden."

DR. ISAAC WATTS.—"Nor do I think that we ought, when we speak concerning the creatures, to affirm positively that their existence shall be equal to that of the Blessed God, especially with regard to the duration of their punishments."—*World to Come.*

MACKNIGHT.—"I must be so candid as to acknowledge that the use of these terms 'for ever,' 'eternal,' 'everlasting,' shows that they who understood these words in a limited sense when applied to punishment put no forced interpretation upon them."

REV. G. BENNET.—"The primary nature of *olam* is 'hidden,' and both as to past and future denotes a duration that is unknown."—*Olam Haneshamoth*, p. 44.

DR. TAYLOR (who thrice wrote out the whole Hebrew Bible).—"*Olam* (*aion*) signifies eternity, not from the proper force of the word, but when the sense of the place or the nature of the subject requires it, as God and His attributes."

PARKHURST.—"*Olam* (*aeon*) seems to be used much more for an indefinite than for an infinite time."—*Lexicon.*

WHISTON.—"The word used about the duration of torments in the New Testament and all over the Septuagint, whence the language of the New Testament was taken, nowhere means a proper eternity."—*Memoirs*, p. 144.

SCHLEUSNER.—"*Aionios* is so used of any space of time that its length must be inferred from the context, the mind of the writer, and the things and persons about which he is speaking."—*Lexic. on Nov. Testament.*

PROF. KNAPP of Halle.—"The Hebrew was destitute of any single word to express endless duration. . . . . The pure idea of eternity is too abstract to

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have been conceived in the early ages of the world, and accordingly is not found expressed by any word in the ancient languages."

PROF. MOSES STUART.—"The different shades by which the word is rendered depend on the object with which *aionios* is associated."

ALEX. CAMPBELL.—"Its radical idea is indefinite duration."

DE LAMMENAIS.—"In Hebrew and Greek the words rendered everlasting have not this sense. They signify 'a long duration of time,' 'a period'; whence the phrase 'during these eternities and beyond.'"

SCARLETT.—"That *aionios* does not mean endless or eternal may appear from considering that no adjective can have a greater force than the noun from which it is derived. If *aion* means 'age' (which none either will or can deny), then *aionios* must mean 'age-lasting,' or duration through the ages to which the thing spoken of relates."

CRUDEN.—"The words eternal, everlasting, for ever, are sometimes taken for a long time, and are not always to be understood strictly."—*Concordance, s. v. Eternal.*

DE QUINCEY.—"Meanwhile all this speculation first and last is pure nonsense. *Aionios* does not mean eternal [*i.e.* endless]. Neither does it mean of a limited duration."

CANON KINGSLEY.—"The word *aion* is never used in Scripture or anywhere else in the sense of endlessness (vulgarly called eternity). It always meant, both in Scripture and out, a period of time."

REV. ARCHER GURNEY.—"The words eternal and everlasting are constantly used in a relative sense in the Old Testament Scriptures with reference to Jewish ordinances, designed to pass away, and they signify indefinite and continuous, until superseded by a higher law, or principle, never tending to come to an end of themselves."

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REV. T. E. FOWLE. — "*Aionios* is a particularly colourless and almost mystical adjective, found in combination with very dissimilar nouns, and qualifying incompatible objects and so lending itself to varying shades of meaning."—*Essay on αἰών*, p. 23.

REV. J. S. BLUNT.—"The conception of eternity in the Semitic languages is that of a long duration and series of ages."—*Dict. of Theology, s. v. Eternity.*

PROFESSOR TAYLOR LEWIS, in an elaborate disquisition on the word in the translation of Lange's *Ecclesiastes*, written against Universalism, gives up the tenability of the argument that *aion, aionios*, necessarily carry the meaning of endless duration; and says of Matt. xxv. 46, "All we can etymologically or exegetically make of the word in this passage is 'These shall go away into the restraint, imprisonment of the world to come.'"

OLSHAUSEN. — "The Bible is deficient in an expression for timelessness. . . . All the Biblical expressions imply or denote long periods."

In looking at the lexicographers, ancient and modern, we are met by this remarkable fact. The later lexicographers—after the fifth century—give to the words *aion* and *aionios* the occasional meaning of "endless," though of course they are all compelled to admit that they also imply limited durations. After that time the words were often used with the connotation of "endlessness," *because by that time theology had read that sense into them.* But the oldest lexicographers are entirely silent as to such a meaning.

Thus HESYCHIUS, who is the oldest of them, defines *aion* as "the life of man, the time of life, and sometimes it is used for a long time."[1]

The SCHOLIAST on Homer (*Il.* v. 685) says that *aion* is "the life of man."

[1] Αἰὼν ὁ βιὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου . . . ποτέ δε ἐπὶ μακροῦ χρόνου νοεῖται. Aristotle's definition is given in *De Caelo*, i. 9. "The limit which includes the time of the life of each is called the *aion* of each."

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APOLLONIUS.—"The aeon is the measure of the human life."

THEODORET (*Migne*, iv. 401) says "*Aion* is not any existing thing, but *an interval* denoting time sometimes infinite when spoken of God, sometimes proportioned to the duration of the creation, and sometimes to the life of man."

JOHN OF DAMASCUS defines *aion* as (1) the life of each man; (2) the life of this world; (3) the life to come."

It is not till we come to PHAVORINUS, in the sixteenth century, that we find "*Aion*, time, life. . . . *Aion* is also the eternal and the endless, *as it seems to the theologian!*" That last clause is very suggestive!

I cannot imagine how Mr. Riddell, as quoted by Dr. Pusey, could say that in classical writers the word was strictly used of eternity (*i.e.* endlessness, in Dr. Pusey's sense). The word *aionios* occurs I believe first in Plato, and since no Greek writer before Plato had ever used *aion* of endlessness it would be very strange if *aionios* in Plato meant "endless." Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Sophocles, Aristotle, all use *aion* of "human life," or a "period." When Aristotle wants to express endless he says not *aionios*, but *αἰὼν συνεχὴς καὶ ἀΐδιος* (*Metaph.* xiv. 7). Plato, inventing the word, uses it five times. In one place he speaks of the "aeonian intoxication" of certain souls in Hades (*Rep.* ii. 363), which is not "endless," for he held that souls returned from Hades. *Aidios*, not *aionios*, is his word for endless in the *Timaeus*.

The Roman games which were called secular were held (nominally) once in a century. The word "secular" was rendered *aionios* by Greek writers. Did they mean the "endless games"?

Let me conclude in the weighty words of Bishop Rust, the successor of Bishop Jeremy Taylor in the See of Dromore. "Some there are," he says, "who

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think that those phrases ["aeonian fire" and "correction"] and the like cannot be reconciled with Origen's opinion. But these objections seem to take the meaning of the word *aionios* from scholastic definitions rather than from the true and lawful masters of language or the authentick rule of its popular use. For 'tis notoriously known that the Jews, whether writing in Hebrew or Greek, do by *olam* and *aion* mean any remarkable period and duration, whether it be of life, of dispensation, or polity. And even by such phrases as 'to eternity and beyond,' they do not mean a scholastic eternity, unless the nature of the things they express require such an interminable duration. Every lexicographer and expositor will furnish you with authorities enough to confirm what I have said."

There are three other words on which we may make a few remarks before proceeding to the exegesis of the most important texts. These words are *apoleia*, "destruction," *asbestos*, "unquenched," and *kolasis*, "punishment."

1. Many regard as decisive for the final ruin of the majority of mankind the words of our Lord that "broad is the path that leadeth to destruction (*apoleian*), and many there be which go in thereat." Yet the most cursory examination of the word ought to show them that the passage has nothing to do with endless torments. No Christian doubts that sin is destruction as long as it is persisted in. The road leads to destruction, and that is the goal to which it leads all who do not turn from it by repentance. But there is nothing in the text to show that men may not be turned from that path hereafter as they are turned here. The same word *apoleia* is used of the "waste" of the spikenard of Mary of Bethany. Let us take another passage where the far

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stronger word *olethros* occurs. St. Paul in the First Epistle to the Corinthians says that he had handed over to Satan the incestuous offender "for the *destruction* of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Yet in the short interval which elapsed between the First and Second Epistles the offender had repented, and was restored to the commmunion of the Church. Is it not, then, clear that the word "destruction" has a limited and temporary sense? and that the effects of it can be removed by repentance?

2. Probably the popular notions of Gehenna are due in no small degree to the entirely unwarrantable translation of the word *asbestos* by the words "that never shall be quenched." The word means "unquenched" or "unquenchable," and to build dogmatic systems on the current usage of a general epithet is to the last degree uncritical and superstitious.

It occurs but three times in the New Testament. In Matt. iii. 12, and Luke iii. 17, "unquenchable fire" is here the metaphor used by John the Baptist for the fire used to burn up the chaff. In Matt. ix. 43 it is also used of the fire of Gehenna.

Nothing but a literalism which defies all the ordinary laws of human language and literature, and which approaches to fetish worship in its slavishness and ignorance, could possibly build on such a word as this the popular doctrine of "endless torments." The word is poetic and metaphoric. In Homer, where it first occurs, it is applied to the fire which for a few hours rages in the Grecian fleet[1]; to the gleam of Hector's helmet; to glory; to laughter; and—most frequently—to shouting.[2] As a prose word *asbestos* means "unslaked lime," as in Gen. xi. 3, the only passage of the Septuagint in which the word occurs. What makes it

[1] *Il.* xvi. 123, i. 599, xi. 50, xvi. 267, &c.
[2] See Wetstein, *Nov. Test.* i. 267.

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more inexcusable to force and exaggerate the meaning of the word is that the equivalent Old Testament phrases refer to the brief flame which burns up the gates of Jerusalem, and the dry trees of the forest of the South. The phrase, "wrath that shall not be quenched,"[1] is used only of national and temporary calamities, and is the same wrath which we are told elsewhere[2] "endureth but the twinkling of an eye," the wrath "of Him who doth not keep His anger for ever."[3]

The word is used in the same popular way in plain prose passages of the Fathers. Thus Eusebius says that the two martyrs, "Cronion and Julian, were first scourged, and then consumed with unquenchable fire"; and again, that two others, Epimachus and Alexander, were "destroyed by unquenchable fire." Would a man be thought to be in his sound senses who attempted to argue that Eusebius could only mean that the fire was a miraculous fire, and still continued to burn? And this mere *epitheton solemne* is to be made a stumbling-block to the faith of mankind, by first forcing it into literalness, and then assuming that, since the metaphoric fire of retribution is once called unquenchable, every soul consigned to it must also remain in it for ever, and be incapable of destruction!

3. The word *kolasis* (incorrectly rendered "torment" in 1 John iv. 18) means "punishment," and although the accurate distinction between it and *timoria* may have been partly obliterated in Hellenistic Greek, it is still confessedly the milder word. It is only used in 1 John iv. 18, and in Matt. xxv. 46. Now *timoria* is "vindictive" or retributive punishment, and is used once only (Heb. x. 29) of the most violent apostates, the most deadly conceivable offenders; and in the same Epistle (xii. 10) we are expressly told that God

[1] Jer. xvii. 27; Is. i. 28-31; Ezek. xx. 47-48.
[2] 2 Kings xxii. 17; Jer. vii. 20; xxi. 12; Amos v. 6, &c.
[3] Ps. xxx. 5, 6; ciii. 9; Mic. vii. 18.

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does not punish us for His pleasure, but for our profit. Everywhere else *kolasis* is used, and accurately *kolasis* means, as Grotius says, "that kind of punishment which tends to the improvement of the criminal."[1] Hence the *kolasis aionios* of Matt. xxv. 46, is "the correction in the future state of being." "Do we want to know," says Professor Max Müller, "what was uppermost in the minds of those who formed the word for punishment, the Latin *poena* or *punio*, the root *pu* in Sanskrit, which means to cleanse, or purify, tells us that the Latin derivative was originally formed, not to express mere striking or torture, but cleansing, correcting, delivering from the stain of sin."

To this corrective aim of all true punishment—a conception to which in modern times the Spirit of God has more and more been leading the nations of Christendom—Origen attached the extremest importance. The Jewish victims, he argued, were killed in order that by them the sins of those who offered them might be cleansed. And could not the same truth apply to the greatest of all victims, who made His life an offering for sin? "Were it not useful to the conversion of sinners to inflict torments upon them, never would a merciful and compassionate God inflict wickedness with punishments."[2]

Nor let those who are so anxious to explain that God's "correction" (*kolasis*) is "vengeance" (*timoria*), forget that in the sole epistle where this latter word occurs we are expressly told that God's punishment is fatherly chastening (*paideusis*), and is intended for

[1] Its first meaning is "clipping," "pruning." On the healing intention of true punishment, see Arist. *Eth.* ii. 3, *Rhet.* i. 10, and Plato, *Protag.* § 38. "No one punishes the wicked looking at the past only, simply for the wrong he has done—that is, no one does this who does not act like a wild beast, desiring only revenge without thought—hence he who seeks to punish with reason . . . punishes for the purpose of deterring from wickedness."

[2] Orig. *Hom. in Ezek.* i. 355; *in Levit.* iii. 196; xi. 248; xiv. 266; *in Num.* x. 302 (Redepenning, ii. 447).

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our interest and advantage (ἐπὶ τὸ συμφέρον), "that we may be partakers of His holiness."[1]

And, indeed, has any other notion of punishment but the corrective one ever been held to correspond to the truest and noblest conception of what punishment should be? Over the door of the prison of St. Michael at Rome, Pope Clement XI., in 1703, ordered to be carved the wise inscription—"Parum est improbos coercere poenâ, nisi probos efficias disciplinâ." "It is not enough to restrain offenders by punishment unless you render them honest by discipline." Was it not from Scripture itself that the Pope learnt this lesson? Again and again do the sacred writers impress upon us the educational function of the divine punishments. "Whom the Lord loveth He correcteth."[2] "Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord."[3] "I have been afflicted that I might learn Thy statutes."[4] "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten."[5] "Behold, I have refined thee. I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."[6] "And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and He shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver."[7]

Thus does Scripture confirm the natural insight of the great heathen moralist who said "chastisement (*kolasis*) aims at correction."[8]

[1] Heb. xii. 10.
[2] Prov. iii. 12.
[3] Ps. xciv. 12; Job. v. 17; Heb. xii. 6, 30.
[4] Ps. cix. 17.
[5] Rev. iii. 19.
[6] Is. xlviii. 10.
[7] Mal. iii. 3.
[8] Arist. *Rhet.* i. 10.

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CHAPTER XIV.

THE GENERAL TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE RESPECTING FUTURE RETRIBUTION.

"Deliver me, O Lord, from the narrowing influence of human lessons, from human systems of theology; teach me directly out of the fulness and freeness of Thine own Word. Hasten the time when, unfettered by sectarian intolerance, and unawed by the authority of men, the Bible shall make its rightful impression upon all the simple and obedient readers thereof, calling no man Master but Christ only." —CHALMERS.

"Why should attempts at further elucidation be discouraged, as if in searching the Scriptures we ought to stop at the sense in which our fathers understood them? and, as if already possessed of all the information that could be given, to imagine that no new accession of light could arise from a new investigation of the original, or the writings of the rabbins? These were much more accustomed than Christian commentators to dwell upon and to catch the rays of light which are reflected from the Hebrew."—BENNET, *Olam Haneshamoth*, p. 2.

"To those Christians whose faith has been crystallised and frozen down in artificial systems of theology . . . every new truth drawn fresh from the Scriptures is an unwelcome guest, or even a suspected enemy."—REV. PROFESSOR BIRKS.

WE learn much in Scripture concerning the nature of God; concerning the efficacy, universality, and preciousness of Christian redemption; concerning the methods of God's government and the objects of His chastisements.

St. John, for instance, in the Epistle which is perhaps the latest utterance of revelation, tells us that God is righteous; that God is light; and (twice over) that God is love.

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How deep is the significance of such revelations, and how awful the responsibility of not clouding their meaning by human fancies! For, as Bacon truly says, "Better to have no opinion of God at all than such an opinion as is unworthy of Him; for the one is unbelief, the other is contumely."

"*God is righteous*":—and therefore He hates all unrighteousness in others, and there can be no unrighteousness in Him. The notions that represent Him as a God of arbitrary caprice, treating men as though they were nothing but dead clay, to be dashed about and shattered at His will—notions which represent His justice as something alien from ours, and those things as good in Him which would be evil in us—these idols of the school are shattered on the rock of the truth that He is righteous!

"*God is Light*":—notions that represent Him as delighting in man's narrow dogmatism, self-satisfied security, and bitter exclusiveness, making His elect and His favoured ones of the religionists who would claim each for his own sect or party a monopoly of His revelation—as though one should love the dwarfed thistles and the jagged bents better than the cedars of Lebanon; these idols of the fanatic, idols of the sectarian, idols of the Pharisee, are shattered by the ringing hammer-stroke of the truth that God is light!

"GOD IS LOVE":—not merely loving, but love[1]; and therefore the notions which would represent Him as only living a life turned towards self, or folded within self, caring only for His own glory, caring nothing for the endless agonies of the creatures He has made, regarding even the sins of children as

[1] "I'm apt to think the man
That could surround the sum of things, and spy
The heart of God and secrets of His empire,
Would speak but love—with him the bright result
Would change the hue of intermediate scenes,
And make one thing of all theology."—GAMBOLD.

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infinite because He is infinite—idols which have so distorted the blessed doctrine of the Atonement as to say that His wrath must have some victim, and therefore that (in the language of one writer) "He drew His sword on Calvary to smite down His only Son,"[1] and of another, that Christ's death "wiped the red anger-spot from the brow of God"[2]—these idols of the zealot, idols of the systematiser, idols of those who think that their remorseless systems can work the righteousness of God—these idols are dashed to pieces by the sweeping and illimitable force of the truth that God is Love.

Of such a God as this—of a God who is Love, Light, Righteousness—we can think with trembling and adoring devotion. "There is mercy with Thee; therefore shalt Thou be feared." But who can "sweetly meditate" on the God of Calvin, of Jonathan Edwards, of Boston, or of Pinamonti, whom they describe as damning little children and young girls to the endless company of ferocious and uncontrolled devils, and holding "sinners like spiders over the pit of hell with one hand, while He torments them with the other"? Is this the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? is it the God who "declareth His almighty power most chiefly by showing mercy and pity"? or is it some Indian Shiva, some deadlier Moloch of the children of Ammon, to whom human beings are to be perpetually burnt in living sacrifice? Can any Christian who sees God in Christ hesitate to stamp such thoughts—such accretions to the just and solemn truth of a future as of a present retribution—with the abhorrence which they deserve?

No! for "God is Love." If He punishes, it is through love. If He chose a people, it was to proclaim His love. If He charges our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to execute His just but merciful judgment against sinners, it is by the work of love. "The

[1] Prof. Parkes. [2] Dr. Cumming.

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source of all His works is love, and the end of all His works is an end of love. Nothing can be found in Him which is not love; for He Himself is Love." [1]

Where can we see most clearly the character of God? Is it not in the life of Him who was "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person"?

If, then, we can best judge of the nature of God in the acts of Jesus Christ, is it not in the acts of One who, while He declared, as none had ever declared, the awful breadth and grandeur and searchingness of the moral law, and who, while He was terrible to false and loveless religionists, and *to them alone*, yet was ever tender to sin and sorrow with an infinite tenderness, and went about releasing the demoniac, giving light to the blind, cleansing the leper, preaching to the poor, eating with sinners, feeding the hungry multitude, listening to the heathen woman's cry, welcoming the outcast publican, praying for His very murderers at the moment that they drove the nails through His torn hands, standing alone with guilt and misery, suffering the weeping woman who was a sinner to wash His feet with her tears, and to wipe them with the hairs of her head?

And if the Lord Jesus thus represented God in His acts, how did He represent Him in His teachings? Was it not solely, essentially, exclusively as a Father? As our Father which art in Heaven? Was it not as endless, unweariable, universal, awful love? Was it not as the God who maketh His sun to shine on the evil and the good, and His rain to fall on the just and on the unjust? as the God who is kind even to the unthankful and the evil? [2] as the God of little children, whose angels behold His face in Heaven? as the God of the lilies, and the ravens, and the falling sparrow, and the lost sheep? as the Father who

[1] Guillaume Monod, *Jugement dernier*, p. 28.
[2] Luke vi. 35.

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weeps upon the necks of His lost and ragged prodigals? as the God by whom the very hairs of our heads are all numbered? If the Fatherhood of God be infinitely deeper and more tender than human fatherhood,—yea, even as He has told us, than human motherhood,[1]—must we go to a heathen moralist to teach us that "little punishment suffices a father for even a great offence"[2]? And who, as he reads such words—as he recalls the stern rebuke of the Almighty to those who defended in a remorseless spirit the fancied "orthodoxy" of their day—who would not cry with trembling humility—

> "Dear God and Father of us all,
> Forgive our faith in cruel lies,
> Forgive the blindness that denies!
> Forgive Thy creature when he takes
> For the all-perfect Love Thou art
> Some grim creation of the heart.
> Cast down our idols! overturn
> Our bloody altars! Let us see
> Thyself in Thy humanity!"[3]

And, indeed, whether we turn to the Old or the New Testament, there is an overwhelming mass of evidence on the side of those who think that God's highest glory is the prerogative of absolute and boundless mercy—that in the words of our collect, "His nature and property are ever to have mercy and forgive."

If we are to press to the utmost limits the meaning of the expression "for ever" and "eternal" in the

[1] Is. xlix. 15. "Can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Comp. Ps. ciii. 13; Jer. xxxi. 20; Mal. iii. 17; Matt. vii. 11.

[2] "Pro peccato magno paulum supplici satis est patri."—TERENT. *Andria*, v. iii.

[3] "We are not at liberty to call that conduct justice or wisdom in the Almighty which we should charge with folly or cruelty in a human governor; or to silence doubts which may have arisen from our own unskilful handling of the Word of Life by a bare appeal to the Divine Sovereignty, as if the Most High were exalted above the eternal laws of justice and goodness which are binding on all the reasonable creatures He has made."—Rev. Prof. BIRKS.

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half-dozen texts scattered throughout the Bible which seem at first sight to reveal for all sinners a hopeless and endless doom at the moment of death, are we to ignore, or minimise, or explain away the multitudes of such texts as these?

And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, the Eternal, the Eternal, a God merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means always leave unpunished.[1]—Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7.

His anger endureth but a moment; in His favour is life.—Ps. xxx. 5.

Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will He teach sinners in the way.—Ps. xxv. 8.

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will He keep His anger for ever.—Ps. ciii. 8, 9.

Unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for Thou renderest unto every man according to his work.—Ps. lxii. 12.

He is good, and His mercy endureth for ever.—Ps. cvi. 1; cvii. 1 (and the whole of this psalm); cxviii. 1—4; cxxxvi. 1—26.

Thou art good, and doest good.—Ps. cxix. 68.

But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared. Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption.—Ps. cxxx. 4, 7.

Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto Me

[1] The last words are specially precious, because they show that God's punishments are but a form of the love and compassion which He has thus in such manifold terms described. That for which the merciful plead is ultimate pardon for all who are recoverable, not entire impunity for any who have sinned.

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every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.—Is. xlv 22, 23.

In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. . . . . For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.—Is. liv. 8, 10.

I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.—Is. lvii. 16.

For the Lord will not cast off for ever: but though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. To crush under His feet all the prisoners of the earth. . . . the Lord approveth not.—Lam. iii. 31—34.

The Lord your God . . is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil. Who knoweth if He will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind Him?—Joel ii. 13, 14.

To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him.—Dan. ix. 9.

I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.—Is. xliii. 25.

They refused to obey. . . . but Thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.—Nehem. ix. 17.

Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.—Micah vii. 18, 19.

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It is needless to continue. To do so would be to fill pages. We are told again and again that *His anger endureth but a moment*[1]; that *He, being full of compassion, forgives iniquity*[2]; that *in a little wrath He hides His face for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will He have mercy*[3]; that *He is gracious, longsuffering, plenteous in mercy, full of compassion*[4]; that *He is the Father of mercies*[5]; that *He is rich in mercy*[6]; that *His mercy is as great as the heaven is high*[7]; that *He is present even in the region of the dead*[8]; that *His tender mercies and lovingkindnesses have been ever of old*[9]; that *He is a just God and a Saviour*[10]; and may not all these attributes be summed up in the grand words of the prophet Isaiah, as plain as words can be :—

For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.[11]

Or in these, no less plain, of the prophet Jeremiah :—

For the Lord will not cast off for ever: but though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.

Or in the equally unmistakable words of the Prophet David, of which, as of the other two passages, it may be said that they simply "could not have been written by any believer in the popular doctrine of endless torments" :—

He will not always chide: neither will He retain His anger for eternity (*le-olam*).[12]

These texts will have slight weight with those only

[1] Ps. xxx. 5. [2] Ps. lxxviii. 38. [3] Is. liv. 7, 8.
[4] Ps. lxxxvi. 15. [5] 2 Cor. i. 3. [6] Eph. ii. 4.
[7] Ps. ciii. 9. [8] Ps. cxxxix. 8. [9] Ps. xxv. 6.
[10] Is. xlv. 21. [11] Is. lvii. 16.
[12] Ps. ciii. 9. "Dieu aime autant chaque homme que tout le genre humain. . . . Éternel, infini, il n'a que des amours immenses."—JOUBERT, i. 103.

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whose souls are hardened into scholastic system; and with those who think that one-half of God's character is mercy and the other half is wrath, and that therefore they must set one against the other; and with those who employ one-hundredth part of the Bible to evacuate of meaning the other ninety-nine; and with those who stretch every severe anthropomorphic metaphor on the rack of literalism and inference, while they minimise as "dangerous" every broad promise of mercy, and quench as "delusive" every bright gleam of final hope; and with those who go to the Bible not to find truth there, but only to snatch from it a semblance of support for their own dogmas; and with those who do despite to every text which runs counter to invincible prejudice. But those who really reverence God's Word will see from these passages, and ten times as many more, that they may trust in the lovingkindness of the Lord for their sad and suffering brethren no less than for themselves, and that if God is forced to punish it is only because He loves. No bigotry, no ignorance, no hard theology, no angry anathemas shall rob us of one inch of the breadth of hope which these words inspire. If we had no book of Scripture left us but the single book of Job we should see from that alone that for the champions of a pitiless "orthodoxy" God feels nothing but disapproval. He does not strive to silence the natural cry of the human heart. He has never reproved the natural sense of horror which, with a "God forbid!" flings from it the syllogisms of a loveless and unspiritual logic.[1]

And if the popular view be true; if according to current theology it had been well (*καλόν*) not for Judas only but the mass of the human race that they

[1] "If to have raised out of the womb of faultless unoffending nothing infinite myriads of men, into a condition from which, unthinking, they should unavoidably drop into eternal unutterable sorrows, be consistent with goodness, contradictions may be true, and all rational deductions but a dream."—PLAIFERE.

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had not been born; if there is no difference between holding even this, and holding that they must suffer *endless torments;* if millions of years of unutterable and inconceivable agonies for millions and millions of mankind are to be the outcome of a few short miserable sinful years on earth—what, we may well ask, is the result of the Atonement? Christ died for human souls. In spite of His Cross shall the great harvest of human souls become the prey of Satan and only the gleanings be the Lord's? Shall Satan gather the clusters of the vintage, and leave for our Father in Heaven only a grape here and there upon the topmost boughs?

Of all the unworthy arguments—and they are many in number—which are urged against the hopes of suffering man, surely not one is so fantastic and dishonest as that a wider hope can only spring from deficient views of the Atonement! When one hears such arguments it is difficult to restrain a strong indignation. Christ came to seek and save the lost; He said that the publican and the harlot entered the kingdom of heaven before the Pharisee; and yet we are to be told that to believe in the fulness and efficacy and victorious infinitude of this redemption—to hope that it will have achieved, more largely than human ignorance has taught us, the very aim for the sake of which alone the mighty work was finished—is to have "deficient views of the Atonement"; or, as the phrase is sometimes varied, to have "inadequate conceptions of the heinousness of sin"! But is it the Gospel of mercy, or is it not rather the message of all-but-universal damnation, which most clouds the blessedness of the Atonement? Do not the views of many writers belie, verse by verse, all that we are told of it from Genesis to Revelation, or, at the least, explain away all the breadth and richness of its blessed significance?

Scarcely had man fallen, when to the woman came

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the promise that her seed "should bruise the serpent's head." How so if the vast majority of her offspring are to agonise in flames for endless millenniums?

As soon as

> "E'en the great deluge, when its task was done,
> Threw up a rosy arch, and ebbed away,"—

Noah and his children, no less than Adam—to whom it was the first command—were bidden to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.[1] Would it not have been, would it not still be, a command of awful irony and cruelty if the earth was to be replenished with whole millions of denizens of an endless hell?

The promise of Abraham was that "in thy seed shall all the nations of earth be blessed."[2] How could they be blessed if all but the few were destined to an unutterable doom?

Of the Divine Redeemer it was prophesied that "He should see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." Would He be satisfied if, according to the common conception of theologians for ages, Satan was to be for ever the lord paramount of countless shuddering and tortured souls?

When Christ upon the Cross, with the one mighty word, *Teletestai!*—"It is finished," ended His life and His work, did that word mean only that the mass of the human race, even of those who should be called by His name, would pass from life to an unending and an unutterable doom?

What is the meaning of all those passages of the New Testament that "Christ is the Lamb of God

[1] Gen. ix. 1; i. 28. "We wish to impress upon the champions of this dogma [the current accretions which I repudiate] that they have no bu iness to marry; for in so doing they run the greatest risk of bringing souls into the world to be tormented for ever."—*L'Alliance Libérale*, December 3, 1870.

[2] Gen. xxii. 18.

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which taketh away the sin of the world"[1]; that "God hath sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved"[2]; that "the Father hath given all things into His hands"[3]; that "He is the Saviour of the Universe"[4]; that "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all things unto Me"[5]; that the Son of Man came "not to destroy men's lives, but to save"[6]; that "He is the propitiation not only for our sins, but also for the whole world"[7]; that Christ died and rose, "that He might be Lord both of the dead and living"[8]; that Christ died "for sins," "for sinners," "for the ungodly," "for the unjust"; that "God laid on Him the iniquity of us all"; that "He tasted death for every man"[9]; that "He gave His life a ransom for all"[10]; that "the grace of God hath been manifested, which is a source of salvation to all men"[11]? What is meant by God being "the Saviour of all men," though "specially of them that believe"[12]? What is meant by "God, being in Christ, not imputing their trespasses unto them"[13]? What is meant by its being His will (*θέλει*)—for who has resisted His will?—that "all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth"[14]? What is meant by the truth that the very object of Christ's Incarnation was "that He might destroy the devil"[15]? What is meant by Christ "tasting death for every rational being except God"[16]?

[1] John. i. 29. [2] John iii. 17. [3] John iii. 35.
[4] 1 John iv. 14. [5] John xii. 32, *leg.* *πάντα*.
[6] Luke ix. 56. [7] 1 John ii. 2. [8] Rom. xiv. 9.
[9] Heb. ii. 9. [10] 1 Tim. ii. 6. [11] Tit. ii. 11, 12.
[12] 1 Tim. iv. 10. [13] 2 Cor. v. 19.

[14] It is sad to see the attempts of St. Augustine to force himself out of the cogency of this text. In one place he says that "all" means "many" (*c. Julian*, iv. 8); in another, that it means some "of every kind" (*Enchirid.* c. 103); in another, that it means that God makes us all *wish* to be saved (*De corrept. et grat.* c. 15); and once more, that it means that no one can be saved except those whom God willed! (*Enchirid. id. l.c.*) See Gieseler, *H. E.* i. 383.

[15] Heb. ii. 14. [16] Heb. ii. 9, *leg.* *χωρὶς Θεοῦ*.

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Are we, at one wave of the wand of an Augustine or a Calvin, to lose nine-tenths of the significance of all these texts, and multitudes more, in the interests of some formal system of theology, half Manichaean in its origin, and wholly dualistic in its results? If it be granted—as I do grant—that not even these texts, manifold as they are, and clear and unlimited as they seem to be, are to be taken in absolute literalism, are they, on the other hand, to be narrowed into perfect consistence with the "*decretum horribile*"? Let those who write in tones of positive hatred against us to whom God has mercifully granted the possibility of embracing a hope somewhat wider than Calvin dreamt of—let them beware lest they tear out of the Bible, which they profess to defend, the precious truths which constitute its very heart. Let them meditate over the question, "Will ye speak wickedly for God? or talk deceitfully for Him?"[1] Let them remember that of the three things which God requires of them one is "to love mercy." Let them learn from one of the sternest epistles in the Bible that the Wisdom which is from above is "full of mercy,"[2] and that "he shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy"; and that "mercy boasteth over (*κατακαυχᾶται*) judgment."

For indeed these revelations of the will of God cut at the very root of the false philosophy and falser theology which, apart from the mere necessities of anthropomorphic expression, make of justice and

[1] Job. xiii. 7.

[2] James iii. 17. This verse furnishes one of the hundreds of distortions of which a conventional exegesis is guilty. The meaning given to the verse, "The wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated . ." is that "orthodoxy" must exist (for this is their perversion of the word "pure") before there can be any pity. The verse has no such meaning. The Bible does not lend itself quite so easily to the manipulations of the *odium theologicum*. "Omnes omnium caritates complexa est Ecclesia" is not true, either of the sects or of the parties.

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mercy two things and not one, as though God's Being and His Eternity would be rent asunder by opposing forces in eternal collision. They are a still stronger refutation of the dark error which makes justice and not love (humanly speaking) the basis of the character of God. God is just; Scripture nowhere says God is justice; it does say God is love. Because He is love, and not mere inexorable justice, He will not deal with us after our sins, neither reward us according to our iniquities. Love is not like some white lily lying on a dark expanse of justice; no mere "flower hung upon a pillar cold and dark as stone." Love is the principle, not the palliative. "Mercy is the only true justice. Justice is but the severe form of mercy." "Mercy boasteth over judgment." "Unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, for Thou renderest unto every man according to his works."

But—since many delight to press the most rigid and literal meaning of every expression of threatening, while they evaporate at a touch all the promises of infinite mercy—what do they make of the many passages for which the advocates of conditional immortality claim also a literal interpretation? I say, unquestioningly and unhesitatingly, that all the passages adduced, and thus interpreted, by Mr. White, Mr. Minton, Mr. R. W. Dale, and other able and thoughtful Christians, furnish a far stronger proof of the ultimate annihilation of the wicked than the "upwards of a hundred texts" of Bishop Horbery furnish of the mediaeval and Calvinistic hell—based, as most of Bishop Horbery's texts are, on an exploded and untenable method of exegesis, and many of them as completely irrelevant to the subject as it is possible to conceive. I do not accept the doctrine of "conditional immortality," but its supporters at least have furnished an impregnable bulwark against the necessity for any man to believe in the hell of Tertullian, or

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Dante, or modern revivalists. If all these wise and faithful inquirers can offer such a mass of Scriptural phraseology in favour of the extinction of being for all hopeless sinners,[1] they too must be Scripturally dealt with before any of us can be bidden to accept the belief of endless tortures in material flames. For the silence of annihilation is a very opposite thing from—and a thing infinitely preferable to—the interminableness of conscious anguish. Once again, I do not accept their views; but I do say that if the argument is to be confined to the literal acceptance of certain expressions of Scripture, unchecked by its general drift, it seems to me that they have incomparably the stronger weight of evidence on their side. They defeat their opponents on their own premisses, and absolutely demolish them with their own weapons. Their arguments are only powerless against those whose premisses are different, and whose weapons are forged in what they deem to be more heavenly armouries than those of literalism and system.[2]

And again, what do traditionalists make of all those texts—neither few nor indistinct—which, on the face of them, apart from all kinds of parings down and explainings away in the interests of scholastic theology—seem so plainly to point to a restitution of all things?

Is there to be a restitution of all things? If not, why did St. Peter speak of it?[3] If so, is it compatible with the belief of a prison full of the maddened and shrieking torments of myriads of the lost? And

[1] Ps. xxxvii. 10, 20, 36; xcii. 7; cxlv. 20; Obad. 16; Mal. iv. 1-3; Matt. xiii. 30, 48, 49; xxi. 41, 44; 1 Thess. v. 3; 2 Thess. i. 9; Heb. ii. 14; Rev. xx. 11-15; xxi. 4, 5, 8, &c.

[2] What are the facts? The "death," "destruction," "loss," &c., of wicked souls is spoken of in the New Testament fifty-six times; the "life" of the soul generally, forty-eight times; its "aeonian life," or what implies it, fifty times; its "loss," or "salvation," without a hint of duration, seven times; and there are but two or three passages at the outside which can be reasonably quoted in favour of endless torments.

[3] Acts iii. 21.

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if there is not to be a restitution, what is the meaning of all the passages in which St. Paul tells us that it is God's good pleasure "to gather together in one *all things* in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth"[1]; that God highly exalted Christ, "that in the name of Jesus *every knee* should bow of things in heaven, and things on earth, and *things under the earth*"[2]; that "it hath pleased the Father by Him to reconcile *all things* unto Himself, by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven"[3]; that Christ must reign till he have put down—caused to cease, made void (*καταργήσῃ*)—all rule and all authority and power, and sent forth judgment unto victory, and swallowed up death in victory[4]; that "the whole creation," "every creature," is "waiting for the redemption of our body, and shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God"[5]; that at the end, when *all things* have been subjected to Christ, the Son also Himself shall be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be *all in all—omnia in omnibus*—all things in all things, and therefore in all men? Is it not a mere paltering with words in a double sense to assert that these many forms of universal expression merely imply unrealised possibilities, not actual facts? or that "all" is to be watered down into a mere handful of the elect?

I urge the question. Are all these passages—even if we do not wish to press them into the dogmatic assertions of Universalism—are they to go for nothing?

[1] Eph. i. 10. [2] Phil. ii. 10.

[3] Col. i. 19, 20. Writing on this verse Keble says, speaking of "the whole creation":—

"The God who hallowed thee, and blest,
Pronouncing thee all good—
Hath He not all thy wrongs redrest,
And all thy bliss renewed?"

See the whole of his poem for the *Fourth Sunday after Trinity.*

[4] 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25; Matt. xii. 20. [5] Rom. viii. 19-24.

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Is this ultimate universality of God's blessed *Immanence in all things*, which Scripture thus expressly, emphatically, and repeatedly asserts, to be some abstract thing which is to mean nothing to agonising millions of countless generations of mankind?

Is Bishop Horbery, or some similar exegete, with his entirely obsolete misinterpretations "of more than a hundred texts," to stand by and say that, as far as the mass of mankind is concerned, all this still means an endless and blaspheming hell? So long as such a place exists how can it be true that everything accursed shall exist no longer (*πᾶν κατάθεμα οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι*)[1]? or that every created thing (*πᾶν κτίσμα*) shall join in praising the Lamb for ages of ages[2]? Is an endless hell of the kind which he describes consistent with that new heaven and new earth where—the lake of fire, which is represented as being on the old earth, having obviously ceased to exist—"there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away"[3]?

And what is to become of the elaborate *general argument* of long passages in St. Paul, of which the whole drift is directly in antagonism to the current view? For the current view is that, after all, Satan is the great victor; that he is to possess the multitude of human souls; that those prodigals whom, up to the instant of death, God has loved so dearly here are, after that instant, to "roar, curse, and blaspheme God" in inextinguishable flames for the countless ages of eternity. When St. Paul says that, "As in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall

[1] Rev. xxii. 3. [2] Rev. v. 13.

[3] Rev. xxi. 4. The allusion to the lake of fire must be retrospective; otherwise (1) either this passage, taken in its natural sense, would be wholly irreconcilable with it, or (2) it must be implied that the fearful, &c., have been annihilated, or (3), that the "part" they once had in that "second death" is ended. Apocalyptic symbols cannot be built into theological arguments, but they do not all look one way.

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all be made alive"[1]; is the explanation of this verse to be in the very teeth of the argument which has been trumpeted as unanswerable for ten centuries, from St. Augustine to Dr. Pusey, that "eternal" (misinterpreted into "endless") must mean the same thing of "punishment" as it does of "life"? Or is the "making alive" of which St. Paul speaks in this paean of victory over Death, the last enemy of mankind, to be made a paean in honour of endless torments for all but the elect few? And when he says that "God hath concluded them *all* in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon *all*,"[2] by what subterfuge of African or Genevan theology is that second "all" to be evacuated of its fuller meaning by literalists who elsewhere talk about plain words? Let any honest and humble-minded man read the Fifth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and then let him look up to Heaven and say, "On my principles of Biblical interpretation all this argument—and its central axiom is the blessed statement that 'where sin abounded, grace did much more abound,'—is perfectly consistent with the Manichaean dogma that only the few will be saved." I ask again, as the Rev. J. Ll. Davies asked years ago, "Will any one contend that the Pauline conception would be satisfied by the endless existence of the majority of the human race in misery and sin? Has Christ subdued those who gnash their teeth at Him because He makes them suffer? Is this the working whereby He is able to subdue even all things to Himself? Will God be all in all when vast multitudes of His creatures are in impotent but absolute rebellion against Him?"

I will now consider generally the texts on which those rely who still cling to the mediaeval conceptions

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 22. [2] Rom. xi. 32.

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which I have repudiated and which (it is needless to add) the Church has never laid down for our belief. But even before I look at them, the mass of evidence with which the previous pages are weighted should be sufficient to show that, so far as these texts are used to support the popular view, they must be interpreted with the extremest caution. They are few in number, and when the false meaning attached to the Greek adjective on which their cogency is supposed to depend is swept away, there is not one among them all which decisively teaches the doctrine of endless torments in the form in which it is popularly held.

Had our Blessed Lord so taught, for me, at any rate, the question would have been absolutely at an end; I should at once have accepted it at His lips, and bowed my head in anguish at the doom of miserable man. Had He so taught, the teaching would be accepted by faithful Christians, even if it seemed to the natural conscience of mankind irreconcilably alien from all His other teaching. But the only question is as to the interpretation of His words; and I have already adduced overwhelming evidence to show that His words have been misinterpreted by the perversion and mistranslation of the terms which He employed.

And if the doctrine of "endless torment for the vast majority in material flames" be not in His words it is not in the words of any of His disciples. Some at least of those disciples would too well remember the stern rebuke which they received from Him when they wished to call down in His name so much as one mere flash of earthly fire.

But how strong is the *à priori* argument against the common view of His meaning which at once results from the all but total reticence of the Old Testament, in which there is not so much as one single text from which that doctrine can find any support except by the use of methods which may

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deceive the ignorant, but which every honest theologian ought by this time to despise!

And how far stronger an argument against the common error as to our Lord's meaning arises from the all but total reticence of the Apostles.

There are four chief Apostles—St. Paul, St. Peter, St. James, St. John, and in the writings of all four—excluding for the moment the disputed symbols of the Apocalypse—there is not one word which teaches us the *endless misery* of any, much less of the majority, of mankind. Yet how worse than cruel would such reticence have been in men who professed to teach "the whole counsel of God," if indeed the common view formed any part of that counsel?

a. ST. PAUL's Epistles comprise the greater part of the New Testament. Again and again in those Epistles passages and arguments occur where the whole nature of the subject would at once have led to some expression of this doctrine, if indeed it had been an essential of the Christian faith.[1] Yet in all these passages, at the very moment at which we should have expected the doctrine to be introduced, we find it is in a marked manner avoided, and some different turn given to the sentence. St. Paul would not say what he did not know. In all St. Paul's thirteen epistles there is but one passage, and that in almost his earliest letter,[2] which any one who understands the meaning of words can even pretend to offer in proof of this dogma; and that passage, as we shall see, bears no such meaning. What St. Paul said was, that if God had shut up all in unbelief it was that He might have mercy upon all. He had learnt from his childhood that He who "visited the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate Him," is also He who showeth mercy unto "thousands and thousands

[1] See, for instance, Rom. ii. 8, 9; v. 21; vi. 23; Gal. v. 21; vi. 8; Phil. iii. 18, 19

[2] 2 Thess. i. 9.

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of generations" of them that love Him and keep His commandments. It was hardly likely the New Gospel should shrink but into a rill of mercy, where even the Old Law was as a river; nay, if the Old was as a river, the New was as an illimitable sea. In Adam *all* had died; in Christ *all* should be made alive. Where sin had abounded, grace had superabounded there.[1]

β. Nor is this reticence less marked in ST. PETER, the Apostle of the Circumcision. In his first and undoubtedly genuine epistle, there is not a word about endless torment. If the second epistle be his, not even there, not even in the terrible imagery of the second chapter, is there one word as to the endless misery of the lost.

γ. Nor is it otherwise with "JAMES, the Lord's brother." Stern as he is in all his moral judgments, stern as he is in his tone of denunciation, he does not utter one syllable which can be interpreted to imply the common doctrine of "endless torments."

δ. Nor is it otherwise with the doctrinal writings of ST. JOHN. It is, as I have said, a common remark of modern conventionality, that those who lean to the side of hope in dwelling on the future of the mass of mankind have never appreciated the "awful malignity" of sin. Like many such remarks, it is hardly worth refuting. Supposing a child told a lie, or stole a shilling, and a father punished it,—punished it with severity: which should we consider the wiser and nobler father, he who had so trained his child, and won his love, that the worst punishment of all would be the child's sense that he was grieved, or he who needed to apply the scourge? Now if a father chastised his child for such an offence, no one would call him unjust. But if he scourged the child day by day, and tortured him with implacable severity, is there any good man who would not think the father a viler offender than the child? And would the father be

[1] Rom. v. 15, 20.

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justified in saying to those who rebuked him that they were creatures of loose morality and easy conscience, who did not realise the awful malignity of theft or lying? If any one were to argue that sin deserves *no* retribution—no future retribution—no terrible retribution—no retribution which must continue as long as the sinful state continues—the sickly theological commonplace that he could have "no due feeling of the heinousness of sin" might have some sense in it, and some charity. But to apply it to men who have spent their lives in trying to wean their fellows from sin, and who have again and again uttered the most solemn warnings against it, can be accounted nothing better than idle talk. One saint of God in this generation—one of whom a friend said that "whenever he thought of God the thought of Thomas Erskine was not far away"—was the one man who had embraced more fully than all others a belief in the final restoration of all mankind. This belief was the very heart and centre of his religious life;—and of him it was testified by one who did not share his views that "No man I ever knew had a deeper sense of the exceeding evil of sin, and of the Divine necessity that sin must be always misery. His universalistic views did not in any way relax his profound sense of God's abhorrence of sin."[1]

St. Augustine, the great repertory of arguments on this subject, which are alike doctrinally, morally, and exegetically false, is ready with what I am reluctantly compelled to call his deplorable sophism that a "sin against an infinite being must deserve an infinite punishment."[2] It is difficult to treat such an argument without scorn. As far as logic is concerned, there is about as much logic in it (as has been rightly said)

[1] Principal Shairp.

[2] He is followed, as usual, by St. Thomas Aquinas. "Unde cum non possit esse infinita poena per intensionem, requiritur ut sit saltem (!) durationе infinita."

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as would be involved in the assertion that if the fourth word of one clause is the word "infinite," the fourth word of the next clause must be the word "infinite" also. It has no more cogency as an argument than the line has which asserts that—

"Who drives fat oxen must himself be fat."

If one did not disdain the mere playing with words which have no ascertainable significance, it would be far truer to say that "finite beings *can* only commit finite sins," or that "infinite strength can never wreak insatiable vengeance upon infinite weakness." But morally, and in another point of view, the Augustinian sophism bears an even worse aspect. It asserts, in direct contradiction to the repeated teaching of Scripture, that the necessity for vengeance is great in proportion to the greatness of Him against whom we offend. It would apply equally to the smallest peccadillo of a little child and to the most brutal act of a deliberate assassin. Will any one pretend that this was the view of the Lord Jesus, who prayed for all His murderers—prayed to His Father for their forgiveness—at the very moment that He was being nailed by them to the cross? Or will any utter the blasphemy that His prayer arose from a deficient estimate of the heinousness of sin?

This no doubt was the very thing which the Pharisees might have said of Him, and did say. They made their "I am holier than thou," heard on every side, and applied it to Christ Himself, mainly because He was always merciful. They were always exclaiming against Him, lifting up their hands, turning up their eyes in scandalised astonishment. "This man eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners." "This man blasphemeth." "We know that this man is a sinner." It is not pity but hardness, it is not purity but impurity, it is not pure and peaceable religion but proud and Pharisaic religionism,

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which says of those who plead for the love of God that they are inclined to heresy, and show a deficient estimate of sin. The saintliest are the most tender. The justest and the purest men and women are not those who have on their lips the perpetual *damnamus* or the reiterated *anathema.* No, the saintliest are the most merciful. Finite purism often means fastidiousness, separation and self-conceit. Purity when it becomes infinite becomes redemptive. Finite purity is content to be pure. Infinite purity is purifying also. It is the direct cause of infinite pity. "It longs and yearns; it waits and prays and strives; it soothes, and when need is, it burns; it has colour, and soul, and life." The more our pity is "human to the red-ripe of the heart," the more akin is it to the Divine. It says, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer."

Yes, "Mercy boasteth over Judgment"; but justice repudiates, even more indignantly than mercy, the traditionalist and Calvinistic hell. It was God who called man out of the clay; and if the honest and unsophisticated conscience of any man—be he saint, like Origen or Thomas Erskine, or be he sinner—be asked whether it is just that the sins against which he may long have vainly struggled, and which have already overwhelmed his life with a sense of remorse, defeat, and misery, should be visited with an everlasting spasm of martyrdom such as men have said that hell is,—the general verdict of the human heart—in its open denial—in its secret recoil—answers No! "Eternal pain," says Augustine, "seems harsh and unjust to human sense." "With the majority of men of the world," says Bishop Butler,—who certainly did not accept the doctrine of hell in its popular form —"this doctrine seems, when they think at all about

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it, monstrous, disproportioned, impossible." If God were to ask the verdict of the creatures He has made as to whether the decree to *endless torments* was a *just* punishment for the sins of a short life, man, with one voice—if he spoke the truth—would say that to his instincts and to his conscience it did not seem to be so. The reason why the heart of many of the best men who have ever lived, and are living now, is rejecting these "horrible decrees," is because they know that God is justice, and that the Judge of all the earth *will* do right. Pain as hopeless and excruciating after countless ages as when the first groan for it was uttered will never seem to man a just punishment for the sins of a life enmeshed with temptation, or for the stumbling in a path which is full of gins. The revolt of man's heart against such teachings will drive him into despair and infidelity, and provoke the well-known but too-daring words of Omar Khayyàm. Such words applied to the God who is our God and shall be our guide unto death, would indeed be blasphemous even on the lips of a Mohammedan; but applied to such a God as has been set forth by the fierce blindness of human ignorance are such as He would Himself approve.

Now St. John speaks in a tone of awful moral severity, yet in his Gospel and Epistles he does not use one word which can be interpreted to imply endless torment. Had he then a deficient view of the malignity of sin?

Facts like these may be ignored—they who utter them may be censured, as all men have been who have endeavoured to convince a multitude that their blindness is not sight; but long after we are in our graves they will prevail with the force of truth, and the best thing which we can hope for some of those who now so bitterly assail them is that in those days their writings may have been consigned to a merciful oblivion; that their thoughts may not survive to

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furnish proofs of the aberrations of scholastic theology, and to alienate mankind from accepting the Gospel of the love of God.

But, after this general survey, I will proceed to examine more closely what I have here stated in the form of general facts.

The Old Testament is the library and the literature of the chosen people. Its books from Moses to Ezra cover the space of fifteen hundred years. It contains the special revelations of God to man during that millennium and a half of the history of Israel, and it contains the records of all His previous revelations back to the very creation of the world. In the Old Testament, therefore, we have all which constitutes the peculiar message of God to man during some four millenniums of human history. Now it is not pretended by any one that the Jews or the Pagans of those ages were less immortal than we, or that their future was a different one from ours. And if so, surely the popular doctrine of hell, were it a true one, was one which, on the repeated assertions of its advocates, it infinitely imported for man to know. And it would indeed have required very explicit teaching—teaching infinitely stronger than the attempt to put a new and literal meaning into a Hebrew phrase which simply implied "the hidden" and "the indefinite,"—to enforce upon Jews the notion that "endless torments for the vast majority" was the decree of Him who bade them be kind to the little birds; and not to seethe the kid in its mother's milk; and to break the Sabbath rest for the sake of their thirsty cattle; and to give anaesthetics to dull the death-pangs of doomed criminals. To hear the common talk about souls daily passing by thousands into hell, we might conclude that nothing is so dangerous or so wicked as to conceal the doctrine of "endless torments," or not

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to dwell upon it in the strongest terms that human tongue can utter. Any concealment of it, any mitigation of it, can only spring, it has been said, from unhappily deficient views of the heinousness of sin; and can only tend to a shipwreck of all virtue by relaxing the tense strain of human terrors. To St. Augustine and his school it was the fear of hell which was believed to people heaven! Surely this is the very cynicism of theology. If this be true, let us canonise La Rochefoucauld, who always said that it was from religious teachers that he had learnt to look on human virtues as only vices in disguise, and on self-interest as the only motive power of human goodness. But

> "Is selfishness
> For time a sin, —spun out to eternity,
> Celestial prudence? Shame!"

And yet it is assumed that man could not be really actuated by any principle short of such selfishness. Preachers have said, again and again, that if there be no endless hell, such as they conceive and represent, it would not be worth any man's while to preach at all. Rob them of their pictures of future horror, and they seem to have no lever left wherewith to move mankind! Strange that for four thousand years the Most High by His servants—while He ever pointed out the natural consequences of sin—revealed no such terror, appealed to no such motives! In all those books of the Old Testament there are but four texts which, even by stretching them on the rack of an impossible exegesis, can be made even to *seem* to bear witness to the Augustinian, mediaeval, and modern views of hell. Neither Moses, nor Samuel, nor Elijah, nor Elisha, nor the writers of the historical books, nor Ezra, nor Nehemiah, nor the Sweet Psalmist of Israel, nor fourteen out of the sixteen Prophets have one word to say which, even

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when they speak of retribution, can by the most violent and unreasonable methods be made to say a word about endless torments.—And the popular theology, which is declared to be so potent, is, on the contrary, so wholly inefficacious, that it has been taught for centuries with this result, that it is unhappily the standing jest alike of the ablest and of the coarsest of those who would be assumed to need it most as an element of terror.

But further, out of these four texts in the whole Old Testament which can alone be forced by any competent critic into the service of Calvinistic eschatology, three are so absolutely irrelevant that to adduce them at all can only prove how feeble are the weapons which can be snatched up for misuse by a despairing cause.

1. Perhaps the most frequently quoted, or rather misquoted, is Eccl. xi. 3: "If the tree fall toward the south or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be."

Again and again, even in recent articles on eschatology, this text is adduced as though it were decisive as to the endless doom which awaits the sinner at the moment of death!

I do not think it an exaggeration to say that *hundreds* of texts of Scripture are constantly quoted in senses quite different from their true meaning;—but there is hardly any instance of the use of a text more glaringly irrelevant than this to the purpose to which it is applied. A doctrine of deepest import —a doctrine which cannot be proved by any other passage in all Scripture—the awful doctrine that each soul, at the instant of death, enters into a final and irreversible condition, is here made to depend on the description of an every-day fact in a passage which does not so much as refer to the future life at all! No one (except in ignorance) can quote this text without showing once more the recklessness

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with which words are torn from their context to be misapplied to objects which were not in the most distant degree in the mind of the writer. Such a misuse furnishes a remarkable illustration of "the ever-widening spiral *ergo* out of the narrow aperture of single texts."

Let us for a moment go on the false assumption that there is any allusion here to the future life; even then the text has no bearing on the popular notions of "hell." It says not a word as to the nature or duration of the doom; as to any possible close of it by the extinction of being; as to its possible mitigations; as to its being a doom which included its own terminability. It is but a metaphor at the best, and certainly two other passages about fallen trees in the Old Testament are singularly the reverse of hopeless. One of these, Is. vi. 13,—in which unhappily our version gives no sense—says that "as the terebinth and the oak, *though cut down, have their stock remaining*, so a holy seed shall be the stock of the felled tree of the nation's glory"; and that promise has light thrown upon it afterwards by the prophecy that there shall be a "rod out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots."

The other passage about a fallen tree is in Dan. iv. 23, 26.

"Whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven. This is the interpretation, O king, whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule."

So that even if we had no New Testament—even if this verse had the remotest reference to the future

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life—even if we might not hope, as has been said, that "He who was called 'the Carpenter' (Mark vi. 3) would still have much to say to the felled and fallen tree," hopelessness and the finality of misery would, on Scripture analogy, be very far indeed from the significance of this verse.

But the verse has nothing to do with the subject. It is nothing but a wise warning against over-anxiety. Do your work, and leave the issues with God. The summary of the six verses to which it belongs is simply, be not

> "Over exquisite
> To cast the fashion of uncertain evils."

The tree will fall to south or north as God wills; simply do thou thy work. Be kind to all, and leave the result to God. We are to be kind and good whatever comes of it, remembering that we are not responsible for events beyond our control.

And the truth thus illustrated accords with the context however we translate the verse. Abn Ezra thinks that the word "tree" should be here taken in the sense of "fruit of the tree"; in which case it would mean, "let thy good deeds be like ripe fruit, which is gathered wherever it falls." Others, as Rosenmüller, make it mean, "Do good to men here, for the opportunity of doing so will cease at death." Others think that there is an allusion to the falling staff of the augur in some form of belomancy. But whatever special interpretation be adopted, it is astonishing, and it is sad, that the verse should be so habitually and so inexcusably wrested from its own proper meaning to one from which it is so completely alien.

2. Another passage, wrested to bear on the future of the lost, is Is. xxxiii. 14, which in the English version runs as follows:—

"The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell

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with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

This text, as it was triumphantly referred to by Jonathan Edwards, will, I suppose, continue to be misapplied for years to come. And yet to apply it to future punishment is an inexcusable perversion. The Prophet has been threatening the horrors of the Assyrian invasion. With the prophetic eye he sees the march of the advancing enemy, and describes the scathing desolation wrought by fire and sword. Then he announces that judgments shall fall on the Assyrians also, and he imagines the sinners and hypocrites exclaiming in terror, "Which among us can abide this consuming fire? Which among us can abide these perpetual conflagrations?"[1] And he answers, "Those can abide them who are not sinners and hypocrites like you." The words refer exclusively to temporal judgments, and to the Assyrian invader. To draw an argument from them in favour of "endless torments" is to argue in a way which can only end by bringing the whole Bible into contempt. It is to make of the Bible a mere *nasus cereus*[2] to be twisted into any semblance which suits us best.

3. Another passage is Is. lxvi. 24.

"And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men who have rebelled [comp. i. 2] against Me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh."

[1] Bishop Lowth's translation. Mr. Cheyne's paraphrase is, "Which of us is destined to be tormented with the Assyrian?"—*Isaiah*, p. 97 (first edition). Hitzig supposed that the special "fire" alluded to is the burning of the plague. Even if it be supposed to be a picture of God Himself as a consuming fire, the reference to earthly judgment continues. The Targum has, "Who of us shall dwell in Zion, where the brightness of His Shechinah is a devouring fire?" (Comp. Ps. xv. 1, Ez. xx. 17.)

[2] Bellarmine taunted Protestant exegetes (*De Verbo Dei*, iii. 1, 2) with making of the Bible a sword which could be thrust into any scabbard.

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To apply this passage to endless torments is again to ignore every principle which centuries of Biblical study have taught us, and to put us back to the crude and impossible methods of ten centuries ago. The verse, once more, has not the remotest reference to that "damnation of the wicked" to which the heading of the chapter—unfortunate and misleading in this as in so many instances—refers it. The Prophet is speaking of Jerusalem and its future peace, and of the vengeance that shall fall on idolaters and apostates who eat swine's flesh and other abominations; and the nations shall come to Zion with offerings, and shall worship at the new moons and sabbaths, and shall go forth and look on the abhorrent valley, where rot or burn the dead corpses of those that have rebelled against God.[1] What is there of endlessness or of torment here? To give it such an explanation is to read Isaiah as if he were writing in the style of Thomas Aquinas, and to turn Semitic passion into theological prose. Even if, in dull violation of all the laws of Eastern idiom and poetry, we were to be so unreasonable as to understand literal worms that literally do not die, and fires literally unquenchable—a proceeding that nothing could excuse but a sort of idolatry of words and syllables—how can carcases, *dead corpses*,[2]—feel the gnawing of the worm, or the burning of the flame? Are we to torture the text into a doctrine of horror by understanding metaphorically the word which is obviously literal, and by understanding literally (so far as it suits us) the expressions

[1] The vision is strictly analogous to that of Ezek. xxxix. 11-16. Gog—the heathen world—gathers himself against Israel. He and his multitude are overthrown by a Divine judgment on the east of the Dead Sea. All Israelites go forth to bury them, their arms and chariots, and occupy seven months in burying them in Hamon-gog, that they may cleanse the land. Comp. Joel iii. 12, Zech. xiv. 12. Why is Isaiah's language to be taken literally, and Ezekiel's not?

[2] *Pegarim*, as in 2 Kings xix. 35.

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which are obviously metaphorical?[1] The poet in his burning patriotism is only depicting in bold imagery the triumph of his people, and the special mention of new moons and sabbaths, and pilgrimages to a spot outside Jerusalem, as well as the fact that he is speaking of dead corpses, should alone have sufficed to rescue his passionate metaphors from being abused into an endless eschatology.

4. The fourth and sole remaining passage is Dan. xii. 2. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and 'everlasting' contempt."

There is more *prima facie* excuse for trying to force this passage into the controversy; and yet the whole bearing of it on the argument literally crumbles to pieces the moment it is examined.

In the first place the translation of the verse is far too uncertain to be relied upon.

Abn Ezra renders it: "Those who awake shall be (appointed) to eternal (aeonian) life, and those who awake not shall be (appointed) to shame and eternal (aeonian) contempt."[2]

Similarly Tregelles: "And many from among the sleepers of the dust shall awake, these shall be unto everlasting (aeonian) life, but those (*i.e.* who do not awake), shall be unto shame and everlasting (aeonian) contempt."

It is difficult to see the particular crisis of which the seer is speaking, but in any case, whether these versions be correct or not, nothing can be more distant from the passage than a notion of endless torments. For "the shame and contempt,"—of

[1] This is the method of the valueless post-Christian forgery of Jewish hatred—the Book of Judith, "the vengeance of the ungodly is fire and worms, and they shall feel them and weep for ever"; but even this "for ever" is only ἕως αἰῶνος, and has therefore no connexion with abstract endlessness.

[2] See White, *Life in Christ*, p. 171; Weill, *Le Judaïsme*, iv. dogm. xiii. ch. iii. 1.

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which the latter word is the same as the "abhorring" of Is. lxvi. 24—is that which attaches to the memory of those who themselves sleep in the dust and do not awake. Hence this passage was explained by the most eminent Rabbis to mean "death and immobility."[1]

What then is the result of our examination of the Old Testament? It is that there are only four passages which, by any pretence or perversion, can be made to imply the everlasting misery of the lost; and these passages are found on examination, and in the opinion of the best critics, to have not the least relevancy. It would be strange in any case if the warnings of this frightful doom, vouchsafed to generations of sinful men, were to be found in three disputed texts of two late Prophets; it is stranger still when we find these texts to be altogether beside the mark. May we not ask with Mr. White, though his view of these texts differs from mine, "Is this the method of the Divine Government? Is there not here rather the method of theologizing handed down to us by men of the fourth century, who knew little of Scripture, little of history, and still less of God the Righteous and the Merciful."[2]

[1] Weill, *Le Judaïsme*, iv. pp. 565, 590. Rabbi Saadjah says, "The meaning is, that for Israelites the resurrection constitutes eternal life, and that for non-Israelites the eternal shame consists in the non-resurrection which is their lot."

[2] *Life in Christ*, p. 172.

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CHAPTER XV.

THE TEACHING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT ON FUTURE RETRIBUTION.

"Dear friend, I am as thoroughly persuaded as I am of my own existence that God will not be overcome of evil, but will overcome evil with good, and I am therefore not much disturbed by one or two difficult passages which seem to point to a different result."—*Letters of Thomas Erskine*, p. 145.

"Just guessing, through their murky blind
Few, faint, and baffling sight,
Streaks of a brighter heaven behind,
A cloudless depth of light."

KEBLE.

LET us turn to the New Testament.

The existence of hell,—if the meaning of that word be limited to the single conception of a retribution beyond the grave,—is revealed. It is the natural sequence of that doctrine of immortality which Christ brought to light. Even an endless future retribution is so far revealed that its *possibility* seems to be dimly implied in certain passages if they be taken alone. What is *not* revealed is the dreadful series of human inferences and imaginations which have now for centuries been conglomerated into the meaning of "hell," but which hardly came into definite existence till the fifth century, and which constitute such a belief as the Church has never at any time required.

The necessity for these imaginations and inferences is absolutely denied. "If in revelation," says Bishop Butler, "there may be found any passages,

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the seeming meaning of which is contrary to natural religion, we may most certainly conclude such seeming meaning not to be the real one." It may be said, with less ambiguity, that where our unsophisticated moral intuition pronounces a doctrine, as popularly set forth, to be unworthy of our reason and abhorrent to our sense of justice, it is less likely that our moral intuition should be wrong than that our interpretation of Scripture should be mistaken. "Of all our faculties," as Professor Jellet says, "the moral intuition is least likely to err. The moral intuition of the middle ages was blunted and degraded by the callousness to suffering induced by centuries of cruelty; it was still further blunted by the supposed revelation of the accretions which we reject. The more it becomes enlightened, the more loving and merciful the heart of man becomes, the more emphatically and indignantly will it pronounce, that men have wronged and distorted by perversion, and misinterpretation, and most unwarranted addition, the words and metaphors of Christ."

And in interpreting these texts I cannot forget the intensity of God's love for man, which is the very essence of the Gospel message. That love is not quenched by our sinfulness, but only mingled with grief. "The Living Word showed forth this grief; the Written Word is full of its utterance. There is no living relationship which the Prophets have not used to give vent to this unutterable sorrow—a father's heart-broken indignation, a mother's pitiful yearning, a lover's agonised relentings, a husband's outraged honour, a friend's broken confidence, a master's insulted dignity,—nor mutual human relationships only. . . . The trouble of the shepherd over one sheep strayed from his charge, the disappointed expectation of the husbandman, add some tones to the great lament." This grief, this love, are manifested even to impenitent sinners. What is there in the Gospel

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to lead us to suppose that God will inflict endless and irremediable torments on any whom His love can reach even beyond the grave? Where are we told that the love of God who changes not will be changed into hatred, fury, and implacable vengeance by the moment of death? "Is it the great crime of dying which can quench the love that our enmity and our sin could not quench? No! Love never faileth."

The principal passages bearing on the subject are found in the Gospel of St. Matthew.

a. It would be quite needless to enter upon any examination of mere general threatenings of temporal or other consequences expressed by the metaphor of "fire." Fire consumes and fire purifies: the notion of a material miraculous fire, meant to keep men alive in pain without destroying them, is a human fiction derived from the literalising of figures ill understood. When St. John Baptist says, "He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire," he is using a metaphor of chaff being burnt up and consumed, to illustrate the work of the Messiah who should in that age, by an immediately impending judgment, purge the good elements of the nation from the bad, by the political and physical destruction of the Jewish race.[1] *If* these passages, and the figures of the burnt tares in the parable, the bad fish cast away, the dead branch burnt, the faithless servant cut asunder, are indeed meant to be taken literally and not as figures, and *if* they are interpreted to imply future torments, not earthly ruin to the Jews to whom they were addressed, nothing can be clearer than that what

[1] Keble clearly caught this meaning.

"Caught from that blaze by wrath divine,
Lost branches of the once-loved vine,
Now wither'd, spent, and sere,
See Israel's sons, like glowing brands,
Toss'd wildly o'er a thousand lands,
For twice a thousand year."

—*Fifth Sunday in Lent.*

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they imply is not hopeless misery, but total destruction.[1] In my view these parabolic metaphors imply neither endless torments nor annihilation, but they are metaphors of the natural laws which are the Divine laws of retribution by which all evil is punished, until it is repented of, both in this world and beyond the grave.

β. It is not, therefore, needful to examine once more the Parables of Judgment.

There is at least a general truth in the remark of Archbishop Whately, that "the only truth that is essential in a parable is the truth of the moral or doctrine conveyed by it." That these parables are full of awful warning—that they dwell on the warning and not on the hope—I freely admit. It is on this very ground that I cannot teach that all souls will be saved. But yet I think that the inferences from these parables are far less demonstrative than is sometimes supposed.

The wicked husbandmen who are cast out mean primarily the Jews who lose their land and their privileges, and on whom heavy temporal judgments fall. Their fate cannot prove any doctrine of endless torments; nor can that of the one single guest who is cast out of the banquet; still less that of the unwise virgins, of whom it is certainly not hinted that they suffered hopeless misery because they were too late for the Bridegroom's feast. The external scenery of these and other parables may indeed be interpreted of great general principles. They certainly imply most solemn and awful warnings, of immediate and future retribution on sloth, faithlessness, and sin. But

[1] The same inference would naturally be drawn from Matt. x. 28, where the Apostles are bidden to fear, not those who kill the body, but Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell. It refers to the undoubted power of God to deprive man of the immortality which He has Himself bestowed. It is an allusion to God's omnipotence, not a declaration of His intention.

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when their details are pressed into the service of systematic eschatology, they are used to ends for which they never were intended, and such a misapplication of them can only lead to contradiction and confusion. No dogmatic truth can be proved by such methods. The vineyard, the wedding banquet, the king's supper, are emblems of the Kingdom of Heaven into which Gentiles should enter, from which Jews would be excluded in the present Messianic Age. None can ever enter it who refuse the first requisite conditions. When men accept those conditions the doors are opened wide.

Nor must it be forgotten that if the details of these parables be sternly pressed to the most remorseless logical inferences, there are at least as many parables which, in accordance with the whole drift of Scripture, we have fully as much right to press into the higher service of hope and mercy. Such are those which tell us that the Good Shepherd will not cease to search for His wandering sheep until He find it; that the imprisonment of the unforgiving debtor is only to last until the last farthing of his debt has been paid,—which debt for sinners is paid as soon as they accept the ransom freely offered; that the leaven is at last to leaven the whole of the three measures of meal; that there is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety-and-nine just persons which need no repentance; that God accepts the repentance of His prodigals even when it has been only wrung from them by misery and shame.

Turning to passages of which the meaning is supposed to be distinctly in favour of the popular view, we shall find how rashly and how extravagantly their meaning has been pressed.

1. There is, for instance, the passage, Matt. v. 21, 22, which ends by saying, "Whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of the Gehenna of fire."

The ordinary interpretation of this passage is so

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strange that the general acceptance of it only shows the otiose state of mind in which men languidly accept the most startling misinterpretations. Our Lord is speaking of three degrees of sinful anger, and telling His hearers that it had been a law for their fathers that a murderer was liable to the "judgment"—*i.e.* the decision, whatever it might be, of the Beth Din, or local court (Deut. xvi. 18). He came to give a more searching law, which would trace to its very source, in evil thoughts and words, the guilt of murder. In His law, whoever is angry with his brother[1] is as guilty as if he thereby came under the cognizance of the Beth Din with its sentence of death by the sword[2]; if he lets his anger burst forth in the contumelious word "worthless,"[3] he is as guilty as if he came under the cognizance of the Sanhedrin, or Supreme Court of Jerusalem; if his rage is still more ungovernable, and he uses the furious taunt of "rebel"[4] (the word which cost so sad a punishment to Moses and Aaron),[5] he morally deserves the severest form of Jewish sentence, the sentence which ordered his body to be burnt and then flung forth and consumed in the Burning Valley.[6] Thus, as Bengel says, the general meaning is that by these forms of anger a man practically makes himself a homicide in the first, second, or third degree. What possible connexion has this with endless torments, the introduction of which renders the whole passage unintelligible? The primary

[1] א. B. Vulg. and many Fathers omit the words "without a cause," which are, however, a fair gloss.

[2] Jos. *Antt.* iv. 8, § 14.

[3] רֵיקָ. ὦ ἄνθρωπε κενέ.—*James* ii. 20.

[4] מוֹרֶה. It involved the imputation of conduct punishable with death. Deut. xxi. 18-20.

[5] Num. xx. 10.

[6] Death by burning was a recognised punishment of the law. (Lev. xx. 14.) The flinging forth of the body into Gehenna rests on tradition only. Compare a very similar triple gradation in *Kiddushin*, f. xxviii. 1. If a man calls another "slave" he deserves excommunication; if "bastard" he deserves forty stripes; if "impious" he deserves death. (See Meuschen, *Hor. Hebr.* p. 34.)

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reference of the "Gehenna of fire" is here, beyond all question, to a form of temporal punishment which had especial horror to the Jewish mind, on the ground, among others, that they, like all ancient nations, attached intense importance to burial rites.[1] When we find that Jewish writings abound in similar turns of phrase, which were intended to inculcate deep moral truths in the most striking form, but in which no one dreamed of confusing the essential meaning by attaching literal importance to the form, we can feel no doubt that our Lord was using language which all His hearers would readily understand.[2]

2. In the same chapter (Matt. v. 29, 30, comp. xviii. 8, 9) occurs the passage in which our Lord says that it is better to cut off the right hand and to pluck out the right eye rather than let them be the means and instruments of sin, since it is profitable that one of the members should perish, and not that the whole body should be cast into Gehenna. None but persons of disturbed reason have ever supposed that the passage ought to be taken literally. Any literal acceptance of it has been emphatically condemned by Church decrees. The general meaning is distinct. It is that the severest self-denial is often the highest self-interest, and that it would be better to incur any amount of personal loss and suffering, and so to enter into relationship with God, by accepting Christ, than to be led into sins so awful as those which involved the casting forth of the body of the criminal into the Burning Valley, which was the severest punishment for crimes against the law. "The whole passage," as Baumgarten-Crusius says, "must not be understood of the punishments of hell." At any rate, the allusion to future

[1] Eccl. vi. 3. "If a man begat an hundred children . . . and also he have no burial, I say that an untimely birth is better than he." Comp. 2 Kings ix. 35; Is. xiv. 19, 20; Jer. xxii. 19.

[2] See *Niddah*, f. 13; *Shabbath*, f. 33, 1; and other passages in Meuschen, &c.

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punishment is only indicated in a dim and indefinite manner, on which no elaborate system can be built. The Rabbis said, using a very similar turn of phrase, "It is better for a man to throw himself into a furnace than to make any one blush in public"[1] . . . . The *truth* thus expressed is admirable; yet would any sane man, except Biblical literalists, be so absurd as to understand it literally?

3. The passage finds its best illustration from the parallel passage in Mark ix. 41–50; and if in that passage its sterner aspects are emphasised, so too is the less terrible line of interpretation abundantly supported. The Beloved Disciple, in the exclusive spirit which always marks an erroneous tendency and an imperfect Christianity, had forbidden one who was casting out demons in Christ's name without having joined the body of the disciples. Christ, after gently rebuking this sectarian pride, proceeds to teach His disciples that the smallest kindness done in His name and for His sake to one of His children, shall gain a reward; and that, on the other hand, it were better to have a millstone hung round the neck and be drowned than to lead His little ones into sin by placing stumbling-blocks in the path of their truth and holiness. Then follows the passage about cutting off the right hand and plucking out the right eye as being a less terrible loss than to be cast into Gehenna. Does not this parallel throw a very different light on the common notions of being cast into Gehenna? It were better to be drowned at once than to put a stumbling-block in the path of the weak; it were better to make a present sacrifice, however costly, than to incur such guilt as was punished by the most ignominious and terrible sentence of the Jewish law —the denial of the rites of burial and the casting of the body into the Burning Valley. What parallel

[1] *Berachoth* (Schwab, p. 404).

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would there be between *a moment* of drowning agony and *endless torments* in material fire?

The particulars which are added to the description of the Burning Valley enhance the awful picture of such a doom. They are "to be cast into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire [words of doubtful genuineness], where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Probably the misunderstanding of this verse has been one main cause of the unscriptural views of the future which have so fatally darkened the souls of many Christians. It is the verse on which St. Augustine lays his main stress. It has been relied upon by those who have accepted the worst aspect of his "hell," and have rejected the mercy of his "purgatory." It is so impossible to eradicate the errors and prejudices of centuries—it is so impossible to impart by a few words that sense of the true meaning and application of phrases which can only come as the result of lifelong culture and literary training—that to many every endeavour to put the words in their true light will always wear the aspect of explaining them away. When the Roman Catholic lifts up his eyes to the dome of St. Peter's, and sees the glittering and colossal inscription, "I say unto thee, thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build my Church," no amount of Protestant argument will shake his conviction that the grounds on which he argues for the supremacy of his Church are based on the express teaching of Christ; and he will treat as so many wilful sophisms all endeavours to explain their true import. When Luther was wearied out with the arguments brought against the doctrine of the Real Presence, he thought it sufficient to end all controversy by again and again repeating the words, "This is my body," and no reasoning as to the true bearing of symbolic expressions would have sufficed to shake his obstinate literalism. When the Calvinist has quoted some text in which

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the word "elect" occurs, or in which allusion is made to Pharaoh and Esau, he thinks it little short of wilful atheism to reject his system of theology. So again, all the rest of Scripture will often fail to put in its due perspective the true doctrine of justification by faith when that expression has been changed from a living truth into a dead shibboleth; and there was a gleam of partial insight in Swedenborg's vision of Melanchthon incessantly employed in the next world in writing down, "The just shall live by faith," while the words disappeared every time that he wrote them down. All the vast weight of the moral and spiritual revelations which have made men reject such pictures of hell as I have quoted, are powerless against those who are unable to coordinate with the rest of God's revelations the literal meaning of a few texts. The superstitious and arbitrarily invented theory of "verbal dictation" is the source of countless errors, miseries, and wrongs, and will always be a fatal hindrance to the right reception of divine truths.

And yet, thank God, multitudes of the wisest and holiest of mankind are at last beginning to understand more of the true explanation of these metaphors. That the *repetition* of this verse about the worm and flame in verses 45–48, is due to some tampering with the text is now admitted.[1] But it is further beginning to be recognised (1) that "the quenchless fire" and

[1] These verses are omitted by the best MS. (ℵ. B. C. L. Δ. &c.). If it be asked what temptation there could have been thus to heighten the supposed luridness of the metaphor by repetition and reiteration, the answer is that to a certain class of minds there is a positive fascination in dwelling on the most frightful supposed features of anguish and horror in a doom which they reserve for others. For instance, how fearfully common in the coarse terrorism of revivalists is the use of the phrase "hell-fire." What is the Scriptural authority for it? It is a complete mistranslation of the phrase "the Gehenna of fire," which occurs exactly twice in the whole Bible (Matt. v. 22, xviii. 9), and there primarily as a literal description of a particular valley! The addition "of fire" is not found in the parallel passages. Here in Mark ix. 46, 47, the "fire" is a heightening interpolation not found in the best MSS.

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"undying worm" are simply descriptions of what the Valley of Hinnom became after the days of King Josiah, because worms bred in the corruption and fires were burnt to consume the refuse and purify the air; (2) that so far as they refer to any future retribution they are metaphors, since not even the dullest imagination has supposed that there are literally deathless worms; (3) that, like so many of the New Testament metaphors, they are borrowed from the page of ancient prophecy; (4) that in the passage of Isaiah from which they are borrowed, and are somewhat softened in the borrowing, they refer to temporal judgments; (5) that as in that passage the worm and flame feed on dead corpses, and are descriptive of temporal judgments, so there must be the very strongest probability that here also they are a general picture of just retribution, whether in this life or in that to come, but that they are wholly inadequate of themselves to support—even if they have the least bearing on—the doctrine of the endlessness of torment.

And difficult as is the passage with which our Lord's discourse concludes—the recovery of the true reading being alone a matter of very considerable uncertainty—it is full of a most precious hopefulness, which, alas! has also been terribly perverted. After warning us that any present self-denial is better than the ultimate consequences of unrepented sin, our Blessed Lord adds, "For every one shall be salted with fire." I will venture to say that no thought could have been more distant in this passage from the tender love of the Blessed Redeemer than that truly "sickening thought," which even Keble was so misled by the hard misinterpretations of human fancy as to bid us "hold fast." Can anything be more reckless than the inference that we should be "salted with fire" in order to preserve us alive in interminable and unutterable agonies! Such

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a fancy (which Augustine has to support by the analogies of worms in hot springs, and salamanders which live in flame!) could not but have been impossible to the mind of Him who came "to save sinners," "to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world." No! "Salt is good," and fire too is good. It is (as the whole context shows) a purifying fire—the "purification and consecration wrought by wisdom"—which shall do the work of salt when salt has failed.[1] It is the refiner's fire of the day of the Lord[2] which shall purify and purge us as gold and silver. For it is not only those who have refused to make the great earthly sacrifices—not only the offenders of Christ's little ones—but "*every one*" who shall be "salted with fire." If the words "salted with fire" do indeed—

> "Seem to show
> How spirits lost in endless woe
> May undecaying live,"

then they are a universal threat;—as much a threat of those undecaying torments for the Pharisee as for the Publican. But that they should ever have been so interpreted, that the actual words and context of the passage and the entire bearing of its symbolism[3] should thus have been wrenched from their true,

[1] In our version we read, "And every sacrifice shall be salted with salt," and popular religionism delights to claim this for the elect, and leave the torment-preserving fire for reprobates. But the clause is probably spurious, not being found in ℵ. B. L. Δ.

[2] Mal. iii. 2.

[3] For "salt" see Matt. v. 13; Luke xiv. 34; Col. iv. 6; Lev. ii. 13. For "fire" see Matt. iii. 11; 1 Cor. iii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 7; Mal. ii. Any one who will observe the scores of different manners in which this passage has been interpreted will see how little suitable it is to be made the basis of the "sickening thought" of Keble. Euthymius Zigabenus explains it of "the fire of faith in God, or of love to man." Luther says that "the Gospel is a fire and a salt; the old man is crucified, renewed, salted." Even Meyer, who takes the darkest view of it, admits that the diversity of interpretation proves the obscurity of the passage, and that the clue to the true meaning is perhaps lost.

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blessed, and consoling applications, and impressed into the service of the most terrible of all conceivable theories, is but too grievously characteristic of that tormenting fear which is the natural antithesis of true love to God. Of all interpretations of the passage the least tenable, even on grammatical and exegetical grounds, is that which applies these two verses to endless torments. So far from aggravating the awful significance of the retribution which is symbolised by "Gehenna," they throw on that symbolism a gleam of blessed light; they are an additional argument in favour of understanding Gehenna —even when it is used as a metaphor of future retribution—as being what the Jews normally held it to be, a purifying and terminable retribution; and we must probably find the key to their solution in that fire which, St. Paul tells us, shall try every man's work, of what kind it is, and from which the workman may be saved, so as by fire, even when his work is burned. Fire in Scripture is the element of life (Is. iv. 5), of purification (Mal. iii. 3), of atonement (Lev. xvi. 27), of transformation (2 Pet. iii. 10);—and, at the worst only, of total destruction (Rev. xx. 9); never of preservation alive for purposes of anguish.

4. The passage most relied upon is Matt. xxv. 41-46. It is the close of the parable concerning the last judgment, and the final separation made between the sheep and the goats. All nations are summoned before the bar of Christ. He divides them as the shepherd divides his flock, setting the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left. To those on His right He says, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." The reason assigned for this reward of blessedness is that they have done deeds of kindness to the sick, and the hungry, and the naked, and the prisoners, and in so doing have done kindness to Him. For their neglect

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of these deeds of kindness, and for no other specified cause, those on the left hear the awful words, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into aeonian fire, prepared"—not for them, but—"for the devil and his angels." . . . "And these shall go away into aeonian punishment, but the righteous into aeonian life":—that is, they shall go respectively into the "correction" and the "life" of "the age to come."

The words, therefore, denounce a stern judgment on those who are unmerciful and hard-hearted. That we are dealing with language which cannot be pressed into close details is manifest from the fact that the decision is represented as turning *solely* on the fulfilment or neglect of one single virtue—active benevolence. When the true meaning of the word "aeonian" is restored, the passage ceases entirely to prove the doctrine of "endless torments," even if these other features of it did not exclude such an explanation.

But the scene described is not the judgment of the dead at all, but of the living. It is the trial of "all the Gentiles"[1] at the second coming of Christ. So little of certainty can there be in the details of its eschatology that such commentators as Keil, Olshausen, and Greswell confine its application to Gentiles only, whereas Grotius and Meyer confine it to Christians only. We cannot then assert with confidence that it is meant to shadow forth the ultimate doom of individual men, but the judgments and losses which follow on the exclusion from the kingdom of Christ. It is a description, based on Old Testament metaphors, of that which shall happen to those Gentiles who, at Christ's coming—His *Parousia* at the close of the old dispensation—shall be found rejecting Him and persecuting His children. The fire which burns for them is that fire which ever burns against sin, and which is therefore described

[1] πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.—ROM. xv. 21-12, &c.

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as prepared for the devil and his angels. There is nothing to indicate that this "fire of the age to come" may not cease when that age is merged into the great, the final, and the blessed consummation.

Further, our Lord could hardly have used the metaphor of the shepherd separating the sheep from the goats without direct reference to the thirty-fourth chapter of Ezekiel. In that chapter God, indignant with the idle and selfish shepherds, says, "Behold I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and he-goats"; or perhaps rather "between other cattle and the rams and the he-goats." But the sheep and goats are alike clean; they alike form part of the common flock[1]; and in the passage of Ezekiel are all under one loving shepherd, and the words used by our Lord for goats—"*eriphia*"—literally "kidlings,"—has nothing in itself which points to final exclusion or implacable indignation.

5. Only one passage remains for our consideration in the Gospels. It is the solemn sentence of warning which our Lord addressed to Judas, Matt. xxvi. 24 (Mark xiv..21). "Woe unto that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed; good were it for that man if he had not been born."

i. A word or two may first be said on the actual phraseology.

a. First it should be observed that the "Woe unto that man," is not, as is usually supposed, an anathema, but, as Stier says, "the most affecting and melting lamentation of love, which feels the woe as much as holiness requires or will admit." The woe is, as in Matt. xxiv. 19, an expression of the deepest pity.

b. The latter clause, which is omitted in the parallel passage of St. Luke, is expressed in a manner which, though scarcely noticed by any commentator, is at least susceptible of another interpretation. It runs literally, "good were it for him (*αὐτῷ*) if he had not

[1] See Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 89.

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been born—that man (ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος)."[1] But for dogmatic objections to such a translation, the verse would seem naturally to require the rendering, "It were good for Him (αὐτῷ), the Son of Man—who has last been mentioned—if that man (Judas) had not been born." The words, "that man" (ὁ ἀνὴρ ἐκεῖνος), at the end of the clause, look as if they were added, so to speak, by an after-thought, lest there should be any confusion in the grammar as to the nominative of the verb (ἐγενήθη). The words would then mean, "For me, as the Son of Man, with that awful abyss of sorrow and agony before Me, into which I must now descend, it were good if that man, who is, humanly speaking, the guilty cause of My sufferings, had not been born. From the depths of My heart I pity him for the sin which he is now committing." And the reason why such a view is not at once to be pronounced untenable is that we find that our Lord *did* shudder at the cup, which yet He drank because it was His Father's will; that He prayed that, if possible, it might pass from Him; that "He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared."[2] If therefore His words be interpreted according to ordinary rules of grammar, there would be no difficulty at all in understanding Him to mean that, though His sufferings had been fore-ordained, yet (humanly speaking) it were good for Him if the traitorous disciple had never been born.[3]

c. But it is perhaps more important to observe that

[1] The peculiar structure of the clause καλὸν ἦν αὐτῷ εἰ μὴ ἐγενήθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος is not noticed in our version, but it is preserved in the *Vulgate*, Wiclif, Tyndale, Luther, the Rhemish, &c.

[2] Matt. xxvi. 36-44; Mark xiv. 36-39; Luke xxii. 42; Heb. v. 7.

[3] The real objection to the grammatical rendering of the word arises from the fact that "it were good for him not to have been born" was a common Jewish phrase (Eccl. vi. 3; *Berachoth*, f. xvii. 1.; *Chagigah*, f. xi. 2, &c.).

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"good were it for him" (*καλὸν ἦν αὐτῷ*), to whomever applied, are far from necessarily meaning the absolute best. "God has many bests." What is "good" for a man in one aspect, may yet through God's infinite mercy not be so when the whole is considered. There may be a better than this good. Our Lord said that "it is not good (*καλόν*) to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs" (Mark vii. 27), yet He did the deed of mercy which, to try the gold of the woman's faith, He had so described. Peter on the mount said, "It is good (*καλόν*) for us to be here"; and so it was, but there was something better. St. Paul, in 1 Cor. vii. 8, says that it is "good" (*καλόν*) to live a life of absolute celibacy; and so under conditions and circumstances it is. Yet this abstract "good" did not prevent St. Paul from recommending marriage as an ordinary "better."[1]

d. I do not, therefore, think that this verse can be used without hesitation as bearing on the unending future of any man, even of Judas. So far from sanctioning the popular views of hell in all their terror, the verse seems to me to be full of mercy. For our examination of the phrase, "it were good for him," has shown that it by no means excludes every blessed alternative of God's goodness. It is not a phrase which is by any means equivalent to "it is a frightful curse to him that he was ever born." It does not demand severer interpretation than that—regarding him in the light of his unutterable crime—it were better for him not to have been born. It does not by any means necessarily imply what men have harshly interpreted it to mean, that Judas was to be shut out for ever from every ray of the grace of God.[2] Let us not distort and exaggerate the words of Him who came to seek and save the lost. While we are not called upon to speculate as to the place and lot of

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 1, 8, 26.

[2] The phrase was common enough—Job iii. 11, x. 18; Ecclus. xxiii. 14; Luke xxii. 29. See former note.

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Judas, let us remember that there were some in the early Church who saw in the remorse of his suicide the germs of a possible repentance, and thought that the wretched man hurried into the next world that he might there implore his Lord for that forgiveness which Peter, who in the hour of danger had denied Him with curses, lived to gain on earth.[1]

e. The words of Christ, and the phrases He used, are best interpreted by their meaning in other parts of His discourses. Let us then take the closest parallel we can find to His use of this phrase. It is in the passage which I have just examined—Mark ix. 42: "And whosoever shall cause to offend one of the little ones who have faith, it were better for him" [the expression is stronger] "if a great millstone hung about his neck, and he had been cast into the sea."[2] No one can mistake the general sense of such language. It means that "it were better to be struck dead than to commit deadly sins." It means what Queen Blanche of Navarre meant when she said that she had rather see her son St. Louis dead at her feet than see him live to commit a mortal sin. Yet how utterly far is the statement of such general principles from being identical with a threat of "hell-fire." Did not David cause the enemies of God to blaspheme, and yet did he not die a holy man? Have not many caused Christ's little ones to offend—have not many great Church doctors even cast stumbling-blocks before the childhood of the world?—and yet, though to do so be a grievous thing—though in the abstract it were better to die than so to have done—though previous death would have saved them, may-hap, a pain and shame worse than death—do we deny them all chance of repentance? do we even deny that, in other aspects, their lives may have been blessed with elements of good? And as for criminals, there

[1] Orig. in Matt. tr. xxv. See *supra*, p. 79.

[2] καλόν ἐστιν αὐτῷ μᾶλλον. (In Matt. xviii. 6 it is συμφέρει αὐτῷ.)

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has been many a criminal, like the Moloch-worshipping Manasseh, of whom men have often said that he had better have never been born, and for whom that saying is perfectly true, when we look at their crimes alone, who have yet lived to find that God forgives. Again and again must we insist that "the law speaks in the tongue of the sons of men"; that Scripture is to be interpreted according to the ordinary usage and interpretation of finite human speech; and that to those who persist in ignoring this plain and obvious principle it must remain in great measure a sealed book, a book which they will be liable to misuse as terribly to the wrong and injury of mankind as it has been misused again and again by the ignorance of rulers and the tyranny of priests.

ii. To me I confess that these stern, sad words to Judas are full of hope. Judas, by the common consent of mankind, was guilty of the most heinous sin which was ever committed. Yet all that our Blessed Lord said even of him (if indeed that interpretation of the words be true) was, "Good were it for him that he had not been born." Take the words in their severest aspect—stretch them to the utmost conceivable extent—and they fall very far short of a threat to Judas of the popular hell. No such interpretation can, even at the worst, be forced from them. For certainly they would have been true to the fullest extent if Judas had died at that very moment, and never suffered one pang more. The words neither do, nor can, contain in themselves a prophecy that he should suffer endless agonies. There is many a wealthy and prosperous man living at this moment in ease and luxury of whom one might still say that even if death were extinction, "Good were it for him that he had not been born." It requires no fire or worm to make that judgment true. Many even of God's saints have exclaimed at moments of sorrow that they wished they had not been born.

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The author of Ecclesiastes says that "an untimely birth"—that is, death at the moment of birth—is better than to "die and have no burial" (Eccl. ix. 3). Has any one dreamt of understanding those words otherwise than as an expression of the deep importance which the Jews attached to burial? Why is one passage of Scripture to be taken literally, while another is treated according to the ordinary limitations of human speech?

iii. But then, lastly, it was Judas alone of all living men of whom these words were spoken. Had the popular teaching about hell been true they would indeed have been amazing in their unexpected mildness. Why, if that popular teaching had been true, it were good for millions and millions of mankind, it were good for the vast majority of the human race—it were good for all but one "little flock"—if they had not been born! If those writers have taught the truth, then for most men the awful conclusion of Schopenhauer is irresistible, and mankind is a failure and a mistake, and it were better that it had never been. But of one man only has this been said, and even in his case the language is quite indefinitely mild compared with what men have dreamed. "Awful as the words were, they have their bright as well as their dark side." In thus applying them to the case of the traitor in its exceptional enormity there is suggested the thought that for others whose guilt were not like his, existence even in the penal suffering which their sins have brought on them may be better than never to have been at all.

6. And another passage used by Dr. Pusey and others to support the Augustinian view of hell is also full of hope by what it implies and full of hope from the mercy and limitation of what it actually says. In Mark iii. 29, the Pharisees—that is the representatives of the religionism of Christ's day—had tried to persuade the people that He had an

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unclean spirit. To speak thus was a fearful and a willing blasphemy. It was deliberately to identify the divinest holiness with demoniac guilt. Our Lord therefore first makes the glorious statement that "all sins shall be forgiven unto men, and blasphemies, however greatly (leg. ὅσα ἐάν) they shall blaspheme, but whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath no remission for the aeon, but is guilty of an aeonian sin (ἁμαρτήματος)." The substitution of "judgment" for sin in many MSS. is due to the "pious fraud" of some scribe who feared consequences more than guilt; and the rendering of "judgment" by "damnation" is one of the worst faults of our English version. And how grievously has the passage been abused by an inferential exegesis! Our Lord says that every sin but one shall be forgiven: that broad and blessed promise has been ignored. The one sin which He says is alone "aeonian" —that is, of which alone the effects must cling to a man in the future aeon—is like that alluded to in Heb. x. 29—the deliberate rejection of divine grace, and the willing substitution of evil for good. Certainly the words mean that there is one sin so heinous that its effects last for even invisible periods beyond the grave. But if this be asserted so emphatically of one sin, does it not necessarily imply that other sins are not so hopeless? It is doubtful whether it is meant that even *this* sin can never be repented of, either here or in the world to come. There is nothing in all the Bible which says that *other* sins may not be repented of after death. The theory of an endless hell caused by endless accumulation of sins after death is the figment of those who felt that they could only blush for the ordinary pleas as to the abstract justice of endless woes for finite transgressions. In all Scripture there is not a word about the possibility of committing sin beyond the grave. That theory is the gratuitous invention of despairing

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traditionalists. And what is said of this "aeonian sin"? It is implied that it must produce aeonian loss, but as to endless torments not a syllable is breathed.

I pass to the writings of St. Paul. There is but one passage in all St. Paul's Epistles—forming as they do the bulk of the New Testament—which can be wrested to support the common view of endless torments. It is in almost his earliest epistle, 2 Thess. i. 9. Speaking of the Second Advent in a manner to which he scarcely ever—if ever—reverted in his later writings, he says that the Lord Jesus "shall be revealed in flaming fire, assigning retribution to them that know not God [*i.e.* Gentiles], and to them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And they shall pay a penalty—aeonian destruction from the face of the Lord, and from the glory of His power, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints."

The whole meaning which the passage can bear is that at Christ's Advent—and primarily at the close of the old dispensation—the guiltily ignorant Gentiles and the faithlessly disobedient Jews will, as a penalty, suffer that aeonian punishment which is defined as "destruction from" (*i.e.* cutting off from) "the presence and glory of God"—aeonian exclusion from the privileges of the kingdom of Heaven. Neither here nor in any other passage of St. Paul, if the passage be explained on the analogy of Scripture language, is there anything about torments, or a word to show that the aeon of this exclusion can never end. In point of fact, these words, were written at a moment of extreme exacerbation against the Jews of Thessalonica, and what is here denounced upon them is a punishment like that of Cain—the *poena*

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damni—the being cut off from the presence of God—the rupture of the old Covenant relation.

In estimating its force we must remember that the words rendered "taking vengeance" mean rather "inflicting retribution"; that the "flaming fire" is not the penal flame of Gehenna, but the Shechinah splendour of the Advent; that those who are to be judged are not ordinary sinners such as are found among the myriads of mankind, but obstinately unbelieving Gentiles, and obstinately disobedient Jews; and that the retribution of aeonian exclusion is inflicted at the First Advent, not at the final Judgment Day.[1]

With regard to the general views of St. Paul it is quite clear that while he speaks of "the perishing," and always insists on the awful certainty that all sin involves, both here and hereafter, retribution and suffering, yet his whole philosophy of Divine history as sketched especially in Rom. viii., xi., and in 1 Cor. xv., points to a final consummation of unclouded splendour and blessedness. He speaks of the abolition of all powers hostile to God, and of the absolute subjection of all creatures to Christ. These words have been understood of a crushing of sinners into agonised and blaspheming impotence; but the annihilation of evil beings is the victory, not of good over evil, but of strength over weakness. The only true victory of good over evil is the conversion of evil beings into good beings.[2]

That the eschatological perspective of the Apostle, as Pfleiderer truly says,[3] embraces the whole universe, is notably attested by his assertion of the final redemption of the "whole creation" from "the bondage of corruption" into "the liberty of the glory of the children of God." I do not see how those who else-

[1] See my *Life of St. Paul*, i. 607. The word "*apoleia*" must be taken in close connection with the following words—destruction from the Lord's Presence.

[2] See Erskine's *Letters*, p. 237.

[3] Paulinismus, *ad fin.*

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where insist so passionately upon the literal acceptance of all the inferences which may be pressed out of metaphorical language can resist the literal acceptance of so plain and unconditioned a statement. If hell be still peopled to the end of all the aeons with even half or one-fourth of the human race, in what sense can it be true that God is either *all* or *in all?* For literalists I see no possible escape from the magnificent comprehensiveness of these prophecies except in the theories of either Universalism or Annihilationism. Throughout the writings of St. Paul the universality of death in Adam is contrasted with the universality of resurrection in Christ; the universality of man's disobedience with the universality of God's mercy in Christ. Is it possible to resist the conclusion that St. Paul, when he speaks out of the fulness and depth of his absolute view of God's dealings with the universe, looks forward to a final restoration? The dualism of predestination seems to lose itself (Rom. ix.-xi.) in the final unity in which we can only suppose that those who are now "the perishing" shall then have been rescued,—in which the dead shall be alive again and the lost be found. If these passages, though they always occur in the very climax of St. Paul's greatest and most triumphant arguments, are not to go *for everything*, surely the humble Christian student may claim that they should not count *for nothing* in his views of eschatology!

It has been the custom to urge many expressions of St. Paul which a moment's thought will show to be irrelevant. Of what use, for instance, is it to say that a larger hope can be refuted by the teaching that certain classes of sinners—drunkards, fornicators, &c.—shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven? Is there any one who has ever supposed that they can enter there while they remain what they are? "St. Paul warns us," says Bishop Wordsworth, that "they who live in the indulgence of fleshly lusts *and*

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do not repent shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven." But if it be legitimate, nay necessary, to interpolate a clause so important as "and do not repent," when speaking of this life, what is there to prevent our saying that neither in this life nor beyond the grave shall flagrant sinners—*while they continue to be such*—enter the kingdom of God? Any number of such texts do not touch the question before us. That question is simply this: "Have we any right to teach as a dogma of the faith that the issues of man's destiny are finally and irrevocably uniform after the few short years of life, and that God's mercy cannot reach any soul beyond the grave?"

I might well decline the task of examining any of the passages which are alleged on behalf of this dogma from the Apocalypse. Like most of such passages, they apply to nations and classes, not to individuals; and primarily to temporal and earthly, not to future and endless judgments. Without in any way weakening its canonical authority, I might (if need were) claim to coordinate its teachings with the later wisdom of St. John's riper and more loving age in the Gospel and Epistles. It is obvious that a book respecting the interpretation of which the Church has never agreed; a book of which the strange symbols have been understood by devout and learned students in hundreds, if not in thousands, of different ways; is less suited than any other to furnish "texts" for the basis of dogmas which find from all the rest of Scripture so very small a measure of support.[1] It is obvious

[1] "To handle a prophetico-poetic book, composed in allegories, as if it were a work of literal meaning, is manifestly an utterly unreasonable and mischievous procedure. . . If an interpreter know that an allegorical composition should be explained as such, and if he, nevertheless,

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too that this book, if its weird metaphors have given rise to endless speculations as to the horrors of Hell, furnishes us also with passages which (as is the case with the rest of Scripture) seem to tell of a glorious final consummation. Until men have approximately agreed as to whether, on the authority of that book, there is or is not to be on earth a literal reign of Christ for a thousand years; until they have settled whether they are going to be Praeterists or Futurists, or neither; until they have come to a reasonable certainty as to whether the main symbolism of the Book points to a progressive history of the Church for hundreds of years, or only to the events which should precede and accompany the coming of Christ in the close of the old dispensation and the destruction of Jerusalem; until they can give us some finally decisive criterion as to the interpretation of this prophetic imagery, and in what cases it is to be taken in the sense of temporal judgments, and in what other cases of everlasting doom,—it is obvious that we are building the popular doctrines upon the sandiest of foundations if we rely for their proof on passages taken from so mysterious a book:—

"Nil agit exemplum quod litem lite resolvit."

Take, for instance, the vision of Rev. xiv., which is the vision of the harvest of the world and the vintage and winepress of the wrath of God. It is the chapter from which has been deduced the pernicious belief—a belief more liable than any other to deprave and harden the character of so many professing Christians—that the blest will exult in the torments of the damned. That passage is as follows:—

"If any man worship the beast. . . he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of

in order to illustrate certain school opinions, torture that allegorical composition until its language seems to be that of the latter, his conduct is a moral scandal."—Lange, *Preface to Apocalypse.*

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the angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torments ascendeth up for aeons of aeons, and they have no rest days nor nights, who worship the beast."

Perhaps it is hardly wonderful that, educated as most men are in ignorance of all the principles which apply to the true appreciation of Scripture language, and in the vanity which makes them think their interpretations infallible, they should take this literally, and apply it to endless torments, though one cannot but wonder at the pure arbitrariness which would, I suppose, refuse, a few verses later, to take literally the river of blood rolling out of a winepress bridle deep for a length of one hundred miles. But meanwhile what becomes of such applications after we have noticed one or two facts?

First of all the judgment obviously has a very limited primary application, because, beyond all shadow of a doubt, the Apocalyptic Beast is, in the first instance, Nero.[1] Here then we at once get the true bearings of the verse. Those who worship the beast, that is the persecuting world-power of Rome,—and as long as they worship the beast are doomed to terrible catastrophes, such as actually did befall Rome during that epoch; and these calamities are compared to being tortured with fire and brimstone. Even Mr. E. B. Elliott, in his elaborate *Horae Apocalypticae*, comes to the conclusion that, so far from revealing the endless torments of the wicked, *the whole vision refers to temporal judgments in this present world.* These earthly catastrophes are indicated in strong Jewish metaphor, not untinged with the natural feelings inspired by an epoch of horrible persecution, and the Lamb and His angels are (in human language), represented as cognizant of the earthly

[1] On this point all recent criticism—worth the name—of every school alike has now passed a unanimous verdict. See my article on "The Beast and his Number," in the *Expositor*, May, 1881.

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overthrow and punishment of those who vainly war against them.[1] And this is to be twisted into the delight of the blest at the shrieks and writhings of the lost, among whom may inevitably be some of those who were sweetest and dearest to them on earth! The whole passage is a symbol as unlike as possible to the inferences which have been deduced from it. And to interpret of interminable agony the expression, "the smoke of their torment ascendeth for aeons of aeons" is doubly erroneous; for first, the phrase is borrowed partly from Gen. xix. 28, and partly from Is. xxxiv. 10, both of which refer to temporal judgments, and of which the second furnishes a strong proof of the false results of an unreasoning literalism. Of the land of Idumaea, Isaiah says, "The streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof into burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever." Interpreted in the light of the prophecy, and of subsequent history, it is clear that "fire" and "brimstone," and "smoke ascending for ever," are terms which, in the highly impassioned and figurative language of prophecy, may be applied to temporal catastrophes, without the remotest allusion to the state of souls in the world beyond the grave.[2] But if the most learned

[1] The word ἐνώπιον, which has been stretched on the rack of inferential "theology," after the whole bearing of the rest of the text has been perverted, is merely the Hebrew לִפְנֵי, as in Luke i. 15,17; Heb. xiii. 21; James iv. 10, &c.

[2] Thus in Jude 7 we are told that the cities of the plains are "set forth as an example suffering the vengeance of aeonian fire." The "aeonian fire" is the temporal overthrow in which those cities perished, and which left its traces on the scathed soil. The only word said about any ultimate punishment of their inhabitants is our Lord's remark that it should be better for them in the Day of Judgment than for Chorazin and Bethsaida. He said that if they had heard His message they would have repented; pointing to the direct inference that the chance of repentance should still be given them; and moreover there is an express prophecy that Sodom should hereafter "return to her former estate" (Ezek. xvi. 55; see *supra*, p. 391).

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and approved of all the Evangelical commentators on the Apocalypse tells us that the vision has no reference to the life to come, what guarantee have we that any of the other visions are not similarly inapplicable to future torments?

And here I will furnish another proof of our liability to misinterpret entirely the daring metaphors of Eastern imagination. We think "a lake of fire and brimstone," and "a fiery oven," and a "burning, fiery furnace," images far too frightful and intense to represent temporal calamities, or anything but the most inconceivable anguish. If we took the trouble to search the Bible, instead of reading into it our own fancies and those of the Fathers, it would remove all misconceptions by throwing the plainest possible light on its own symbols and figurative forms of expression. Thus in Deut. iv. 20 Egypt is said to have been to the Israelites an "iron furnace"; and the same terrible metaphor is repeated in Jer. xi. 4, and in 1 Kings viii. 51 ("Thy people which Thou broughtest forth out of Egypt from the midst of the furnace of iron"). And yet the metaphors imply a condition so far removed from intolerable torments that the children of Israel said, "It was well with us in Egypt," and positively sighed for that which they describe as a land of sensual ease! "We remember the fish that we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick." Until we take the trouble to learn something of the hyperbolic character of Eastern and prophetic metaphor, it is certain that we shall be led continually into wild mistakes.

Instances so decisive will probably be sufficient for many competent and candid readers. They will see how little we can build dogmas on such metaphors as the Devil being cast with the Beast (Nero and the Roman world-powers) and the false prophet (?) "into the lake of fire and brimstone, and tormented by day

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and by night for the aeons of the aeons "[1]; into which also are cast two such abstract entities as "Death," and "Hades." At any rate he will see that this lake of fire is on the earth, and that immediately afterwards we read of that earth being destroyed, and a new heaven and a new earth in which there is to be no more death or curse. In the Book of Revelation there are infinitely great and precious truths, but certainly no method which has ever yet been applied to it justifies us in regarding the notions of future retribution which have been founded on the literalising of its symbols as other than in the last degree precarious and wrong.[2]

Further, let me say once more that if any one could prove the impossible thesis that these passages must be taken literally, or even quasi-literally, the argument of those who derive from them a belief in the future annihilation of the wicked is absolutely irresistible. When they argue with those who accept similar methods of interpretation to their own—with those, therefore, who still cling to a mediaeval style of exegesis—they have most triumphantly the best of the argument. No demolition can be so logical and so complete as that which Mr. White, Mr. Minton, and others have inflicted on the arguments hitherto brought against them by those who think that these questions require nothing for their decision but the shuffling and manipulations of a few phrases and

[1] Rev. xx. 10.

[2] "To make language which applies to religious sects or nations in their temporal relation apply to individual men in their eternal destinies —to make fire literal when it is only a figure—to go on exhausting the resources of an arithmetical imagination, and saying that after trillions of years 'it will but be breakfast time in hell,' is to speak beyond the Word; it is to vulgarise God's righteous judgments, and beget a sense of exaggeration and untruth in the hearer's mind which will surely promote infidelity and induration of heart rather than reverential fear of God's holy, and just, yet also, in the largest sense, merciful indignation." —ALEX. BROWN.

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texts. The devout believers in conditional immortality are perfectly right in insisting that if we bind ourselves by the literal meaning of the greatest number of Biblical expressions there is ten times more in the Bible which points to extinction as the final doom of the wicked than there is which points to their future existence in everlasting agonies. If I am not drawn in the smallest degree to their views it is because I derive my belief, not from the literal meaning of certain words and phrases, but from many wider and deeper considerations, and especially from the judgment which I form on the principles by which human language is to be interpreted, and on the entire drift and tenor of Scripture as a revelation of the love and fatherhood of God.

It is then the reverse of the truth to assert in the style so dear to theological controversialists, that eternal torments are "indisputably taught in twenty-six passages of the New Testament." They are not indisputably taught in so much as one. So far as I can see I say, with Dr. Isaac Watts, that I cannot find one single "text" in all Scripture which, when fairly interpreted, teaches, as a matter of faith, or in a way even approaching to distinctness and decisiveness, the common views about "endless torments." Most of those which are quoted in this connection including the "upwards of a hundred" adduced years ago by Bishop Horbery, and appealed to by Bishop Ryle, are entirely irrelevant; others are mistranslated and misexplained; other are pressed to an extent of inference which, if applied to other passages, would lead to the most pernicious absurdities. Explained by the known usage and meaning of words, their argumentative force in favour of the mediaeval "hell" crumbles to dust. Thousands of half-informed writers, inflated with a very mistaken belief in their own infallibility, will probably go on repeating them in order still further to stereotype the prejudices

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of those who seek nothing but the confirmation of their existing belief. But in the course of time they will cease to be thus misapplied, because such a method of explaining them will only cause a smile. And "it is morally inconceivable if it had been the intention of Heaven to convey to mankind . . . the threatening of a torment which should be absolutely endless, that such a threatening would be, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, expressed in terms which literally signify something wholly inconsistent with such a destiny; and that the announcement should be dubiously ascertainable only from passages in which it is difficult to distinguish metaphors from simple terms, and where the terms employed are themselves undoubtedly employed by Jewish Rabbis and in the Bible to denote a limited period of duration in punishment. A question so vast as the eternal destinies of the human race cannot be determined on the evidence of a few poetic or prophetic phrases."

The abuse of texts has been a dreadful curse in the history of Christendom. To foster it has been a masterpiece of Satanic ingenuity. By means of it a large part of the Bible has been torn away from the service of God and placed at the disposal of the wiles of the devil. It has given tenfold force to the cunning of his deceits. By means of it he has, in generation after generation, arrayed many of the clergy against the advance of knowledge, and on the side of ignorance and sin. The Old Testament was quoted against our Lord and against His Apostles; the Old and the New alike have been quoted times without number against the wisest teachings of the saintliest men. The martyrs of science have been mostly slain, the reformers of religion have been mostly murdered, by the enginery of isolated texts. The tyranny of tyrants has been defended by the supposed sanction which texts gave to the duty of passive obedience; and tyrannicides have none the less

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been defended by other texts which seem to imply approval of Ehud and of Jael. Wars of extermination have been justified out of the Pentateuch and the Book of Judges. The Inquisition has had its handful of favourite texts. Slavery has quoted its texts. Modern religious hatred defends itself by texts. Persecution, intolerance, subterfuge, oppression, ignorance, have all appealed to the texts whose abuse has been suggested to them by the glozing tempter. How deep was the insight into this truth of our greatest poet when he wrote:

> "The devil can quote Scripture for his purpose.
> An evil soul producing holy witness
> Is like a villain with a smiling cheek;
> A goodly apple rotten at the core";

and again:

> "In religion
> What damnèd error but some sober brow
> Will bless it and approve it with a text,
> Hiding the grossness with fair ornament."

I say again, that I care but little in any controversy for the stress laid on one or two isolated and dubious expressions, snatched here and there from the sacred literature of fifteen hundred years and explained with no reference to the language in which they were formulated, or the history in the midst of which they arose. They may be torn from their context; they may be distorted; they may be misinterpreted; they may be irrelevant; they may be misunderstood; they may be in direct apparent contradiction to other texts more numerous and more weighty; they may reflect the ignorance of a dark age or the fragments of an imperfect revelation, or the bitterness of a human passion; they may be an unwilling concession to imperfection, or a temporary stepping-stone to progress. "In reading the Scriptures," says Bishop Rust, "we are not to understand any text in such

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sense as is not plain in Scripture, or is contrary to Scripture, or contrary to the law of nature, or against the general goodness of God to mankind; or to lessen the goodness of God, or contrary to the gracious spirit and mercifulness of a saint; or contrary to the mind of Christ which He declared when on earth; or contrary to the fruits of the Blessed Spirit, or that shall tend to contradict or lessen the glory of God, or lessen the greatness and riches of His grace." What the Bible teaches as a whole—what the Bibles teach as a whole—for History, and Conscience, and Nature, and Experience, these too are sacred books—that, and that only, is the clear revelation and immutable will of God.

And now if any reader thinks that there has been any "explaining away" of these texts let him consider whether the advocates of the popular view will not have to "explain away," not only multitudes of passages in the Psalms of David and in the Old Testament, but also in the New Testament? If the following passages be calmly and humbly considered, with no attempt to minimise their natural significance, is there nothing in them which necessitates a modification of the current teaching?

THE SYNOPTISTS.

ST. MATTHEW.

xviii. 11. "The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost."

xiii. 33. "Till the whole was leavened."

ST. LUKE.

ix. 56. "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

xii. 48. "But he that knew not, and did commit

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things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." [This verse seems to *prove* that there is such a thing in the life to come as a terminable retribution. Can "few" be synonymous with "endless"?]

xix. 10. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

xv. 4. "What man of you having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which was lost, until he find it?" [John x. 11; Ps. cxix. 176; Is. liii. 6.]

ST. JOHN.

i. 29. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away (ὁ αἴρων) the sin of the world."

iii. 17. "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world (ὁ κόσμος) through Him might be saved."

iii. 35. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hands." [Comp. xiii. 3; Matt. xi. 27; xxviii. 18; Heb. ii. 8.]

iv. 42. "This is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

xii. 32. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

xii. 47. "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."

1 JOHN.

ii. 2. "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

iii. 8. "The Son of God was manifested that He might destroy (ἵνα λύσῃ) the works of the devil."

iv. 14. "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."

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ACTS.

iii. 21. "Until the times of restitution of all things."

ST. PAUL.

Rom. v. 20. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." [See the entire argument of the chapter.]

viii. 22. "The creature itself also shall be delivered from corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." [See verses 19-24.]

xi. 32. "God hath concluded them all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all." [See the argument of the whole chapter.]

xiv. 9. "To this end Christ both died, and rose and revived, that He might be the Lord both of the dead and living." [And consider the drift of the entire Epistle.]

1 Cor. xv. 22. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." [Consider the entire drift of the argument.]

xv. 28. "That God may be all in all" (*πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν*).[1]

2 Cor. v. 19. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

Eph. i. 10. "That He might gather together in one all things in Christ."

Phil. ii. 10, 11. "That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of beings in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth." [Compare Rev. v. 13.]

Col. i. 19, 20. "It hath pleased the Father . . . . by Him to reconcile all things to Himself."

[1] Dr. Pusey's attempt to explain away these glorious words is one of the most singular pieces of exegesis which I have ever read. I cannot suppose that any human being will be convinced by it.

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1 Tim. ii. 4. "Who willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

ii. 6. "Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

iv. 10. "The living God who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."

Heb. ii. 9. "That He by the grace of God should taste death for every man," or reading *χωρὶς Θεοῦ*, "that He should taste death for every man (for every thing), except God." [Compare verses 14, 15.]

ix. 26. "Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin (*εἰς ἀθέτησιν ἁμαρτίας*) by the sacrifice of Himself."

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CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

"So runs my creed: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry."—TENNYSON.

"And Thou, oh God, by whom are seen
All creatures as they be,
Forgive me, if too close I lean
My human heart on Thee."—WHITTIER.

BUT to conclude: If, as I have shown, the ultimate extinction of the being of sinners appears to be taught by the literal meaning of many passages of Scripture; and if the final restoration of all mankind appears also to be taught in many passages of Scripture; and if the popular conception of endless torments for the vast majority is nowhere indisputably taught in Scripture; and if it is only by inference we are led to the fear that any souls may be finally excluded from the presence of God at the end of the ages; if, I say, these are the conclusions to which Scripture alone has led us, what is it that on this subject I finally believe?

It will be seen at once that I propound no "Optimist theory" (as it has been called), "that all men will be saved"; though since the suppression of the old 42nd article that view is nowhere declared to be untenable in our formularies as interpreted by the highest authority. Still less do I teach that all men will attain to everlasting felicity, or that—to refer to

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the coarse instance selected by Jerome—a Jezebel will be at last as a Virgin Mary. Nay, I do not even say that some men may not for ever suffer from the consequences of their sins, and from impenitence respecting them, dearly as I wish that it were possible for us to believe in final universal felicity as a glorious triumph of the love of God and the cross of Christ. But I think that even if some portion of the "pain of loss" may continue for ever, there is nothing to sanction the assertion that such hopes as sinners may here embrace may not also be open to them, at least until the great Judgment, in the Intermediate State beyond the grave. The death of the soul shall last as long as its willing sinfulness lasts, and its "hell" burn as long as its enmity to God continues. The only hope is that from this sin and this enmity it may at last—far off—before the end of the ages—possibly be saved. Hell and death are endless conditions so long as there is persistent impenitence. They cease when the soul repents, but not till then. But who shall say that when the moment of death is over there can be no further answer to the sinner's cry, "Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will He be favourable no more? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? Doth His promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath He shut up His lovingkindness in displeasure?"

But it is due to my readers that I should try to express this in language as clear as the subject admits, not by way of laying down a dogma or of giving expression to a novelty, but by stating what I hold to be the teaching—not of sects or of individuals, or even of majorities,—but of the Catholic Church, of which I am, and ever have been, a loyal and faithful, though most humble and most unworthy son.

In accordance then with what the Church has ever held—adding nothing to that Catholic creed, and subtracting nothing from it,

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I believe that on the subject of man's future it has been God's will to leave us uninstructed in details, and that He has vouchsafed to us only so much light as may serve to guide our lives.

I believe in God the Father, the Creator; in God the Son, the Redeemer; in God the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

I believe that God is Love.

I believe that God willeth all men to be saved.

I believe that God has given to all men the gift of immortality, and that the gifts of God are without repentance.

I believe that every man shall stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ, and shall be judged according to his deeds.

I believe that He who shall be our Judge is He who died for the sins of the whole world.

I believe that "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins."

I believe in the forgiveness of sins.

I believe that all who are saved are saved only by grace through faith; and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God.

I believe that every penitent and pardoned soul will pass from this life into a condition of hope, blessedness, and peace.

I believe that man's destiny stops not at the grave, and that many who knew not Christ here will know Him there.

I believe that "in the depths of the Divine compassion there may be opportunity to win faith in the future state."

I believe that hereafter—whether by means of the "almost-sacrament of death" or in other ways unknown to us—God's mercy may reach many who, to all earthly appearance, might seem to us to die in a lost and unregenerate state.

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I believe that as unrepented sin is punished here, so also it is punished beyond the grave.

I believe that the punishment is effected, not by arbitrary inflictions, but by natural and inevitable consequences, and therefore that the expressions which have been interpreted to mean physical and material agonies by worm and flame are metaphors for a state of remorse and alienation from God.

I see reasons to hope that these agonies may be so tempered by the mercy of God that the soul may hereafter find some measure of peace and patience, even if it be not admitted into His vision and His sabbath.

I believe that among the punishments of the world to come there are "few stripes" as well as "many stripes," and I do not see how any fair interpretation of the metaphor, "few stripes," can be made to involve the conception of endlessness for all who incur future retribution.

I believe that Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison, and I see reasons to hope that since the Gospel was thus once preached "to them that were dead," the offers of God's mercy may in some form be extended to the soul, even after death.

I believe that there is an Intermediate State of the soul, and that the great separation of souls into two classes will not take place until the final judgment.

I believe that we are permitted to hope that, whether by a process of discipline, or enlightenment, or purification, or punishment, or by the special mercy of God in Christ, or in consequence of prayer, the state of many souls may be one of progress and diminishing sorrow, and of advancing happiness in the Intermediate State.

I believe that there will be degrees of blessedness and degrees of punishment or deprivation, and I see reasons to hope that there may be gradual mitigations of penal doom to all souls that accept the Will of God respecting them.

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I believe, as Christ has said, that "all manner of sin shall be forgiven unto men, and their blasphemies, however greatly they shall blaspheme," and that as there is but one sin of which He said that it should be forgiven neither in this aeon nor in the next, there must be some sins which will be forgiven in the next as well as in this.

I believe that without holiness no man can see the Lord, and that no sinner can be pardoned or accepted till he has repented, and till his free will is in unison with the Will of God; and I cannot tell whether some souls may not resist God for ever, and therefore may not be for ever shut out from His presence.

And I believe that to be without God is "hell"; and that in this sense there is a hell beyond the grave; and that for any soul to fall even for a time into this condition, though it be through its own hardened impenitence and resistance of God's grace, is a very awful and terrible prospect; and that in this sense there may be for some souls an endless hell. But I see reason to hope that through God's mercy, and through the merits of Christ's sacrifice, the great majority of mankind may be delivered from this awful doom. For, according to the Scriptures, though, I know not what its nature will be or how it will be effected,

I believe in the restitution of all things; and

I believe in the coming of that time when,—though in what sense I cannot pretend to explain or to fathom—

GOD WILL BE ALL IN ALL.

Δόξα τῷ Θεῷ.

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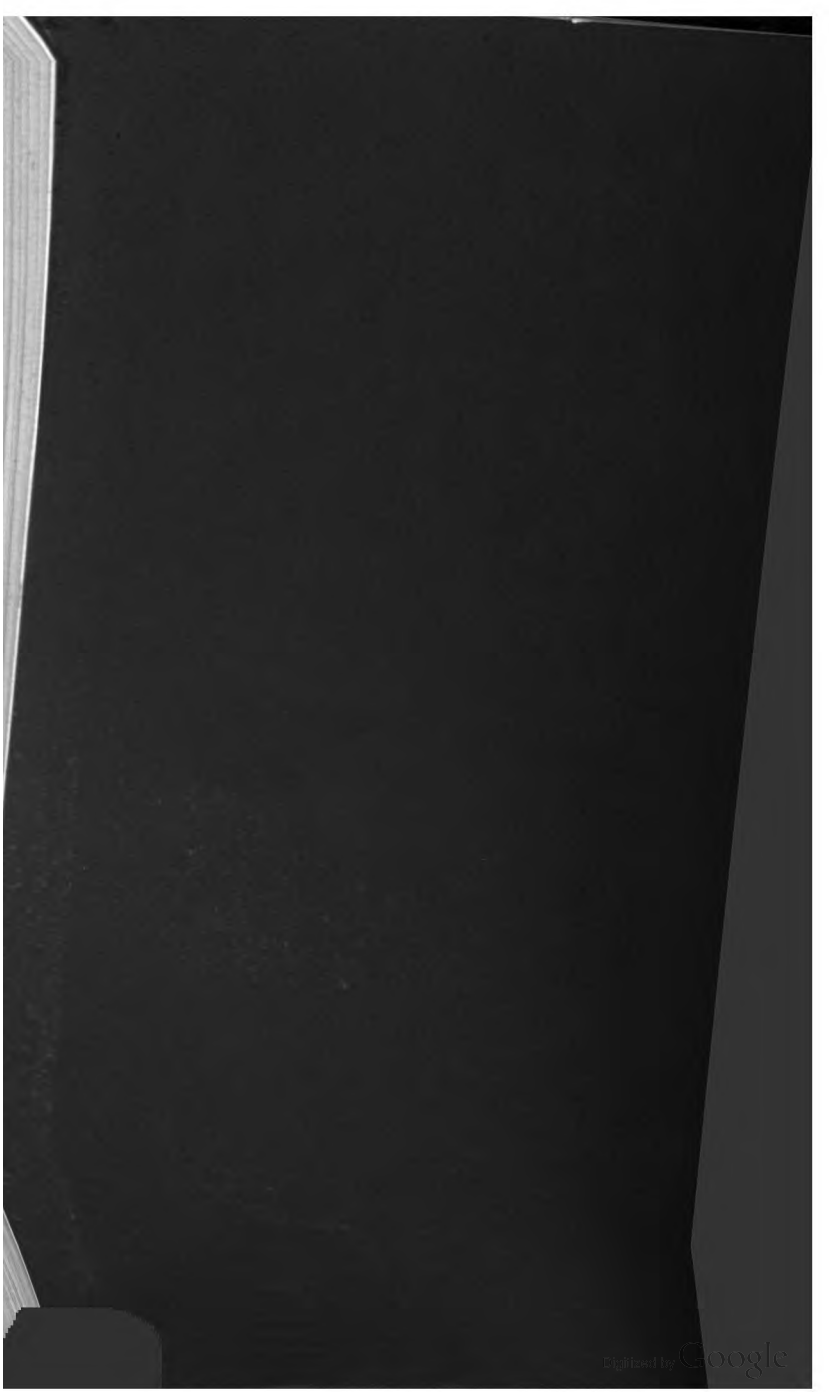
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